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ROOKWOOD:

A ROMANCE.

I see how Ruin, with a palsied hand,
Begins to shake our ancient house to dust.
YORKSHIRE TRAGEDY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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ROOKWOOD.

BOOK III.

CONTINUED.

BOOK THE THIRD.

CHAPTER VI.

——— Mischiefs
Are like the visits of Franciscan Friars,
They never come to prey upon us single.
DEVIL'S LAW CASE.

RETURN we now to Eleanor Mowbray. After she had parted from Ranulph Rookwood, and had watched him till he disappeared beneath the arches of the church porch, her heart sank, and, drawing herself back within the carriage, she became a prey to the most poignant affliction. In vain she endeavoured to shake off this feeling of desolation, by picturing to herself the meeting with her lover in a few hours, in happiness. It would not be. Despair had taken possession of her—the magic fabric of delight melted away, or only gleamed to tantalize, at unreachable distance. A presentiment

that Ranulph would never be her's, had taken root in her imagination, and overshadowed all the rest. In vain she strove to turn to thoughts more cheering and consolatory. Oppressed as by a nightmare, her bosom refused to be relieved of its load.

While Eleanor was thus plunged in affliction, Mrs. Mowbray's speculations, and, in a less degree, those of her son, were directed towards the same object, Ranulph Rookwood. Busied in revolving the singular though as yet unintelligible avowal he had made of a possible change in his fortunes, she exerted all her force of mind to discover some clue to the mystery. A change in his fortunes? This change had no reference to Lady Rookwood. That idea he had himself refuted; and, indeed, she was aware of the unalienable nature of her brother's property. Could it relate to herself? It had been in the power of her father, Sir Reginald Rookwood, who had created the entail, to have disposed of his lands as he saw fitting; but he *had* disposed of them, so she had heard, and the issue *male* of his

sons were named in the succession; and she, herself, in her last dread interview with her father (the recollection of which was graven like the cicatrice of a wound upon her memory—a wound that had its seasons of throes and shooting tortures), had heard his declaration, that she herself should be for ever excluded from his possessions—from participation in his wealth—that she should be a stranger to his name—to his house—to his blood. After sifting every suggestion carefully, she became satisfied that if a new claimant had sprung up to Rookwood, it was in the same character that Ranulph himself derived his title; and the more closely she canvassed her brother's early life, the more fully assured she became of the correctness of her conjectures.

From whatever source derived, Mrs. Mowbray was intimately acquainted with Sir Piers's unfortunate attachment to Susan Bradley; and aware also that there had been offspring born to them, she could not dwell upon the detail that had been given of her brother's devoted

love, and the descriptions of Susan's matchless beauty, without arriving at the conclusion that, in the ardour of passion, he had yielded to the entreaties and blandishments of this lovely and seductive girl, and secretly espoused her; but, from the circumstance of her lowly origin, had hesitated to avow his union, when her sudden death prevented the necessity of disclosure. This hypothesis did not, it is true, account for her brother's subsequent desertion of his child; but when Mrs. Mowbray set the weakness of Sir Piers's character in the balance with the resolute qualities of his wife, she perceived which was likely to preponderate, and that if he had ever conceived the intention of avowing his marriage, his apprehensions of the consequences (as was in reality the fact) would have deterred him from open acknowledgment. This suspicion, once awakened in Mrs. Mowbray's mind, received abundant confirmation in her opinion, from Ranulph's half-expressed hints, and his sudden and mysterious appearance at the funeral.

And who was he who should now be heir to Rookwood? This was a question she had no means of answering. She knew nothing, and could conceive nothing; but her curiosity, nevertheless, was strongly excited on this head; the more so, inasmuch as she was unable, in the slightest degree, to gratify it. Another consideration, from which she shrank with a sense of extreme uneasiness (for cold and haughty as she was, Mrs. Mowbray was not utterly devoid of sensibility), was, whether in case Ranulph Rookwood should be supplanted in his inheritance, she would decline his suit of Eleanor. She would fain, at this moment, have shunned this self investigation; the response she felt would be too prompt. She could not accept him for her son.

Mrs. Mowbray, it must be remembered, was the elder born of Sir Reginald Rookwood. She was also the daughter of his gentle bride, the Lady Eleanor; but she partook more of the calculating pride and vindictive sternness which distinguished her father, than of her mother's

softer attributes. The legacy of vengeance, bequeathed by her dying parent, which she tacitly accepted, even as a child, and resolved upon executing, could not have been delegated to a hand more capable of its ministration. Nothing but her own degradation (and to her a *mésalliance*, such as she formed, was the greatest degradation that could have befallen her, both in her own esteem and in that of Sir Reginald) could inflict the blow she wished to strike. She at once determined to immolate herself.

The story has been already told. Plighted to an earl—she fled with a pauper. No overwhelming sentiment of love influenced her in this unworthy choice—no thought, save that of heaping the bitterest mortification upon her father's head, induced its commission; but she had studied Sir Reginald's character, and in his only assailable point she stabbed him. The blow went home, but revenge is a two-edged sword; the blade smote either way.

United to one whom she neither respected

nor regarded—unsupported, in her fallen state, by love, which alone could have buoyed her up amid the stormy sea into which she had plunged—consumed by secret pride, which, like the Spartan youth, who sustained, unflinching, the fiery coal that fell off the altar, she bore without complaining—tortured by all the horrors of poverty (and to the proud heart there can scarce be greater horrors), she felt that if she had succeeded in wreaking her vengeance upon her father, the injury she had done herself was the more lasting and irremediable. Still, through it all, her firmness of character forsook her not. Fallen she might be; yet it was by her own act that she fell; and she would have died, rather than utter a murmur —have endured a martyrdom, sooner than seek for a reconciliation.

Brighter days did indeed dawn upon her. A slight accession of fortune restored her to comparative independence, and her husband's decease shortly after, liberated her from a certain controul which she had found irksome, and

completed her emancipation. By prudent management, and by entirely residing abroad in a state of seclusion, and in a style of the most rigid economy, she had greatly increased her means; but still, with a sense of her own sufferings fresh in her remembrance, she determined that never, with her consent, should a daughter of her's wed other than a wealthy suitor.

With this disposition, it may be readily conceived Mrs. Mowbray would view any material change in the condition of Ranulph Rookwood as an absolute bar to his union with Eleanor; and that she did regard it in that light was certain. The match between the cousins she considered as in every way desirable; nay, as most eligible; and the coldness with which she received Ranulph's advances upon the intimacy, arose from the haughty reluctance on her part to be the first to make overtures of peace, the differences between the father and daughter having extended to the other children. As Ranulph appeared fixed in his attachment, and

had incurred his father's resentment by his consistent adherence to his election, acceding only to a temporary estrangement from the object of his affections, with the express determination of renewing his offer at the expiration of that period of probation; and as Eleanor herself seemed to be equally involved in the same tender sentiment, Mrs. Mowbray tacitly complied with her daughter's inclinations, and, without making a remark on the subject, suffered her to remain unmolested, up to the time of Sir Piers's death, and of Ranulph's expected return. Thus, when she conceived that all obstacles were removed, a more fatal one presented itself. She trembled for Eleanor; but the spirit of worldliness prevailed. She persuaded herself that, in the event of the contingency of which she was apprehensive, it was her duty to break off the proposed alliance. Little sophistication was required to satisfy her scruples. Prudence and policy formed her mental salvo. It is surprising how easily people consider themselves guided by a sense of duty, when

interest and inclination are at hand to direct them.

And Eleanor? As she stole a furtive glance at her daughter, and saw her evident perturbation, some perception of the cruelty of such an act towards her darling child was awakened within her bosom; but the feeling was transitory. Little of the softness, none of the weakness, of her sex pertained to Mrs. Mowbray. Love was a passion of which she had often heard, but which she had never felt. She could conceive it; but her theoretical (and we might say likewise heretical) opinion was so wide of the reality, as to lead her into the erroneous notion that the raging flame could be restrained within certain limits, and might be extinguished altogether, should circumstances require it. She felt that *she* was able to do so, and reasoning upon that fallacious argument, she fancied that it would be equally in the power of her daughter to exercise such controul over her affections. Nothing more, she imagined would be necessary, than the expression of her

wish, to be followed by Eleanor's ready acquiescence. Submission, the meekest, the gentlest, to her mother's behests, formed the main feature in Eleanor's affectionate character: compliance with her injunctions seemed to be the primary law of her nature, as, indeed, it should be ever in the child; but perhaps that tyrannous ascendancy which a strong mind is apt to assume over one of weaker constitution (and by this epithet we mean that yielding weakness which is woman's strength), led Mrs. Mowbray to exact more obedience from her daughter than was consistent with parental tenderness to require, and made the passive submission of Eleanor appear more in the light of subjection than of duty.

Reared in the most perfect seclusion, the whole of her childhood had been spent immediately under her mother's eye, and to her alone was she indebted for instruction and counsel; by her mother alone was the pliant material of her disposition modelled. Up to the period when she first beheld Ranulph Rookwood, her mo-

ther, her brother, of whom lately she had seen little, her flowers, her music, her books, her bark, in which she skimmed the blue tide of the Garonne, her favourite dog her never-absent companion, these had formed the little world of her regard, the nucleus of her sympathies, the sole objects of her solicitudes; they were her delights—her occupations—her existence.

Her brother returned. The family left France for England. She exchanged the quietude, the solitude, of the lonely château, for the giddy whirl of the British metropolis. The transition was too violent to be pleasing. She was dazzled, but overpowered; delighted, yet bewildered; and often sighed in secret for her bark upon the Garonne, and her bower upon its banks. It was long ere she became reconciled to customs, to usages, and to society, to which she had never been habituated. She met with Ranulph Rookwood. New emotions were instantly awakened. Her heart she felt had hitherto been void. She loved, and for the first time. What a dawn of delight, fresh

and beautiful as a glimpse of Eden, burst upon her young imagination!—

> For she on honey dew had fed,
> And drank the milk of Paradise.

Filled with a thousand tender aspirations unknown before, inexplicable to the exquisite simplicity of her nature, her soul had now no longer to dwell upon memory for delight, the present had happiness sufficient. The impression once received, she thought not of the flowers she had cultured, of the river nooks she had haunted, of the large antiquated house (dearer to her than a palace), and its many untenanted and unfurnished rooms, along whose sounding floors her merry feet had skipped, or whose walls had echoed with her joyous laughter, with her lightsome song; or, if she thought of them, her musings were now mysteriously associated with Ranulph, peopling the wilderness with his image, and linking his presence with each favourite spot.

Bright as was its dawn, the love of Eleanor was scarce called into existence, ere it was crushed; the sky that was filled with the

"purple light of love" was suddenly overcast; the opening flower was rudely trodden down; the chords of harmony were shivered as soon as struck. Ranulph departed. All that had hitherto been radiant, became as night; amid which, Hope alone, like a solitary star (and even Hope was oft obscure), shone down upon her. They met again, it is true, after their lengthened separation, with hearts unchanged—with vows unbroken; the sky for an instant was filled with rosy hue again, but not as heretofore. Presentiments of coming misfortune, like chilly winds, blighted the joy of their reunion, and clouds seemed gathering in the horizon of their happiness.

While Eleanor pursued this tristful train of reflection, the time insensibly wore away, until the sudden stoppage of the carriage aroused the party from their meditation. Major Mowbray perceived that the occasion of the halt was the rapid advance of a horseman, who was nearing them at full speed. The appearance of the horseman was somewhat singular, and might have created some uneasiness as

to the nature of his approach, had not the Major immediately recognised a friend; he was, nevertheless, greatly surprised to see him, and turned to Mrs. Mowbray to inform her that Father Ambrose, to his infinite astonishment, was coming to meet them, and appeared, from his manner, to be the bearer of unwelcome tidings.

Wrapped in a long black cloak, with a broad brimmed hat drawn closely over his brows, it was impossible to distinguish further of the priest's figure and features beyond the circumstance of his height, which was remarkable, until he had reached the carriage window, when, raising his hat, he disclosed a head that Titian might have painted, and which, arising from the dark drapery, looked not unlike the visage of some grave and saturnine Venetian. There was a venerable expanse of forehead, thinly scattered with hair, towering over black pent-house-like brows, which, in their turn, shadowed keen penetrating priest-like eyes; the temples were hollow, and blue veins might be traced beneath the sallow skin; the cheek-

bones high, and there was something in the face that spoke of self-mortification; while the thin livid lips closely compressed, and the austere and sinister expression of his countenance, showed that his self-abasement, if he had ever practised it, had scarcely prostrated the demon of pride, whose dominion might still be traced in the lines and furrows of his haughty physiognomy. The Father looked at Mrs. Mowbray, and then glanced suspiciously at Eleanor. Mrs. Mowbray appeared to understand him.

"You would say a word to me in private," said Mrs. Mowbray, "shall I descend?"

The Priest bowed assent.

"It is not to you alone that my mission extends," said he, gravely; "you are all in part concerned; your son had better alight with you."

"Instantly," replied the Major. "If you will give your horse in charge to the postillion, we will attend you at once."

With a feeling of renewed apprehension, connected, she knew not why, with Ranulph,

Eleanor beheld her mother and brother descend from the carriage.

Father Ambrose was, perhaps, the only being whom Eleanor disliked. She had felt an unaccountable antipathy towards him, which she could neither extirpate nor controul, during their long and close intimacy. It may be necessary to mention that Eleanor's religious culture had been in accordance with the tenets of the Romish Church, in whose faith (the faith of her ancestry) her mother had continued; and that Father Ambrose, with whom she had first become acquainted during the residence of the family near Bordeaux, was her ghostly adviser and confessor. An Englishman by birth, he had been appointed Curé to the diocese in which they dwelt, and was, consequently, a frequent visitor, almost a constant inmate, of the château: yet, though duty and respect would have prompted her to regard the Father with affection, Eleanor could never conquer the feelings of dislike and distrust which she had at first entertained towards him; a dislike which was increased by the strange controul in which he

seemed to hold her mother, who regarded him with a veneration approaching to infatuation. It was, therefore, with satisfaction that she bade him adieu. He had, however, followed his friends to England under a feigned name (as, being a recusant Romish priest, and supposed to have been engaged in certain jesuitical plots, his return to his own country was attended with considerable risk), and had now remained domesticated with them for some months. That he had been in some way, early in life, connected with a branch of the house of Rookwood, Eleanor was aware (she fancied he might have been engaged in political intrigue with Sir Reginald, which would have well accorded with his ardent, ambitious temperament), and the knowledge of this circumstance made her doubly apprehensive, lest the nature of his present communication should have reference to her lover, towards whose cause the Father had never been favourable, and respecting whose situation he might have made some discovery, which she feared he might use to Ranulph's disadvantage.

With such misgivings, therefore, Eleanor

watched the motions of the party narrowly, in hope to gain some clue, from their gestures, to the subject of their conversation. From the earnest manner of the priest, and the interest which his narrative seemed to excite in his hearers, it was evident that his communication was of importance.

Accompanied by Father Ambrose, Mrs. Mowbray returned to the carriage, while the Major, mounting the horse of the latter, after bidding a hasty adieu to his sister, adding, with a look that belied the consolation intended to be conveyed by his words, "that all was well," but without staying to offer her any explanation of the cause of his sudden departure, rode back the way they had just traversed, and in the direction of Rookwood. Bereft of the only person to whom she could have applied for information, though dying with curiosity and anxiety, to know the meaning of this singular interview, and of the sudden change of plans which she felt so intimately concerned herself, Eleanor was constrained to preserve

silence, as, after their entrance into the carriage, her mother again seemed lost in painful reflection, and heeded her not; and the Father drawing from his pocket a small volume, appeared intently occupied in its perusal.

"Dear mother," said Eleanor, at length turning to Mrs. Mowbray, "my brother is gone——"

"To Rookwood," said Mrs. Mowbray, in a tone calculated to check further inquiry; but Eleanor was too anxious to notice it.

"And wherefore, mother?" said she, "may I not know?"

"Not as yet, my child—not as yet," replied Mrs. Mowbray; "you will learn all sufficiently early."

The priest now raised his cat-like eyes from the book, to watch the effect of this speech, but dropped them instantly, as Eleanor turned towards him. She had been about to appeal to him, but having witnessed this look, she relinquished her scarce-formed purpose, and endeavoured to divert her tristful thoughts

by gazing through the glimmering medium of her tears upon the soothing aspect of external nature—that aspect which, in sunshine or in storm, hath ever relief in store for a heart embittered by the stony coldness of human nature. Turn to the bosom of nature, ye that are sore afflicted, and ye shall find the relief ye seek—the sympathy after which ye yearn!

The road meanwhile had led them through a long woody valley, and was now climbing the sides of a steep hill. They were soon in the vicinity of the Priory, and of the gipsies' encampment. The priest leaned forward, and whispered something in Mrs. Mowbray's ear, who looked towards the ruined shrine, part of whose mouldering walls were visible from the road.

At this moment the clatter of a horse's hoofs, and the sound of a loud voice, commanding the postillion, in a menacing tone, to stop, accompanied by a volley of imprecations, interrupted the conference, and bespoke the approach of an unwelcome intruder, and one

whom all, too truly, feared would not be readily dismissed. The postillion, however, did his best to rid them of the assailant. Perceiving a masked horseman behind him, approaching at a furious rate, he had little doubt as to his intentions, and Turpin soon made his doubts certainties. He called to him to stop, but the fellow paid no attention to his command, however peremptory, and disregarded even the pistol which he saw, in a casual glimpse over his near side, was presented at his person. Clapping his spurs into his horses' flanks, he sought succour in flight. Turpin was by his side in an instant. As the highwayman endeavoured to catch his reins, the lad suddenly wheeled the carriage right upon him, and but for the dexterity of Turpin, and the clever conduct of his mare, would inevitably have crushed him against the road-side. As it was, his left leg was slightly grazed. Irritated at this, Turpin fired over the man's head, and with the butt-end of the pistol felled him from his seat. Startled by the

sound, and no longer under the governance of their rider, the horses rushed with frantic violence towards a ditch, which bounded the other side of the highway, down which the carriage was precipitated, and at once overturned. Turpin's first act, after he had ascertained that no mischief had been occasioned to those within, beyond the alarm incident to the shock, was, to compel the postillion, who had by this time gained his legs, to release the horses from their trace. This done, with the best grace he could assume, and adjusting his mask, he opened the carriage, and proceeded to liberate the captives.

"Beg pardon, Madam," said he, so soon as he had released Mrs. Mowbray, "excessively sorry, upon my soul, to have been the cause of so much unnecessary alarm to you—all the fault, I assure you, of that rascal of a postillion; had the fellow only pulled up when I commanded him, all this might have been avoided—you will remember that, when you pay him—all his fault, I assure you, Ma'am."

Receiving no reply, he proceeded to extricate Eleanor, with whose beauty the inflammable highwayman was instantly smitten. Leaving the Father to shift for himself, he turned to address some observation of coarse gallantry to her; but she eluded his grasp, and flew to her mother's side.

"It is useless, Sir," said Mrs. Mowbray, as Turpin drew near them, "to affect ignorance of your intentions. You have already occasioned us serious alarm, much delay and inconvenience. I trust, therefore, that beyond our purses, which are but scantily supplied, but to which you are welcome, we shall sustain no molestation. You seem to have less of the ruffian about you than the rest of your lawless race, and are not, I should hope, destitute of common humanity."

"Common humanity!" replied Turpin, "bless you, Madam, I'm the most humane creature breathing; would not hurt a fly, much less a lady. Incivility was never laid to my charge. This business may be managed in a few

seconds; and as soon as we have settled the matter, I'll lend your stupid Jack-boy a hand to put the horses to the carriage again, and get the wheels out of the ditch. You have a banker, Ma'am, I suppose in town—perhaps in the country; but I don't like country bankers; besides I want a little ready cash in Rumville—beg pardon, Ma'am, London I mean; but my ears have been so stunned with those Romany patterers, I almost *think* in flash. Just draw me a cheque; I've pen and ink always ready: a cheque for fifty pounds, Ma'am—only fifty. What's your banker's name? I've blank cheques of all the best houses in my pocket; that, and a kiss from the pretty lips of that cherry-cheeked maid," winking to Eleanor, "will fully content me. You see you have neither an exorbitant nor uncivil personage to deal with."

Eleanor shrank closer towards her mother. Exhausted by previous agitation of the night, greatly frightened by the shock which she had just sustained, and still more alarmed by the

words and gestures of the highwayman, she felt that she was momentarily in danger of fainting, and with difficulty prevented herself from falling. The Priest, who had succeeded in freeing himself from the carriage, now placed himself between Turpin and the ladies.

"Be satisfied, misguided man," said the Father, in a stern voice, offering a purse, which Mrs. Mowbray hastily extended towards him, "with the crime you have already committed, and seek not to peril your soul, by deeper guilt: be content with the plunder you now obtain, and depart; for, by my holy calling, I affirm to you, that if you advance one footstep towards the further molestation of these ladies, it shall be at the hazard of your life."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Turpin. "Now this is what I like; who would have thought the old autem bawler had so much pluck in him. Sir, I commend you for your courage, but you are mistaken; I am the quietest man breathing, and never harm a human being; in proof of which, only look at your rascal of a postillion, whom

any one of my friends would have sent post-haste to the devil, for half the trouble he gave me; but easy as I am, I never choose to be baulked in my humours. I must have the fifty, and the buss, and then I'm off, as soon as you like, and I may as well have the kiss, while the old lady signs the cheque, and then we shall have the seal as well as the signature. Poh—poh—no nonsense. Many a pretty lass has thought it an honour to be kissed by Turpin."

Eleanor recoiled with deepest disgust, as she saw the highwayman thrust aside the useless opposition of the priest, and approach her. He had removed his mask; his face, flushed with insolent triumph, was turned towards her. Despite the loathing which curdled the blood within her veins, she could not avert her eyes. He drew near, she uttered a shrill scream. At that moment a powerful grasp was laid upon Turpin's shoulder; he turned, and beheld Luke.

"Save me! save me!" cried Eleanor, addressing the new comer.

"Damnation!" said the highwayman, "what has brought you here? one would think

you were turned assistant to all distressed damsels. Quit your hold, or by the God above us, you will repent it."

"Fool!" exclaimed Luke, "talk thus to one who heeds you." And as he spoke, he hurled Turpin backwards with so much force that, staggering a few yards, the highwayman fell to the ground.

The priest stood like one stunned with surprise at Luke's sudden appearance, and subsequent daring action.

Luke meanwhile approached Eleanor. He gazed upon her with curiosity mixed with admiration, for his heart told him she was very fair. A death-like paleness had spread over her cheeks; yet still, despite the want of colour, she looked exquisitely beautiful, and her large blue eyes eloquently thanked her deliverer for her rescue. The words she wanted were supplied by Mrs. Mowbray, who thanked him in appropriate terms; when they were interrupted by Turpin, who had by this time picked himself up, and was drawing near them. His countenance wore a fierce expression.

"I tell you what," said he, "Luke Bradley, or Luke Rookwood, or whatever else you may call yourself, you have taken a damned unfair advantage of me in this matter, and deserve nothing better at my hands than that I should call you to instant account for it—and damme if I don't too——"

"Luke Bradley!" interrupted Mrs. Mowbray, "are you that individual?"

"Even so, Madam," replied Luke.

"Father Ambrose, is this the person of whom you spoke?" eagerly asked the lady.

"It is," returned the Priest.

"Did he not call you Luke Rookwood?" eagerly demanded Eleanor of Luke. "Is that also your name?"

"Rookwood is my name, fair cousin," replied Luke, "if I may venture to call you so."

"And Ranulph Rookwood is——"

"My brother."

"I never heard he had a brother," cried Eleanor, with some agitation. "How can that be?"

"I am his brother, nevertheless," replied Luke moodily—"his ELDER BROTHER!"

Eleanor turned to her mother and the priest with a look of imploring anguish—she saw a confirmation of the truth of this statement in their glances. No contradiction was offered by either to his statement; both, indeed, appeared in some mysterious manner prepared for it. This, then, was the dreaded secret. This, then, was the cause of her brother's sudden departure. The truth flashed with lightning swiftness across her brain.

Chagrined and mortified, Luke saw that glance of inquiry. His pride was hurt at the preference thus naturally shown towards his brother. He had been struck, deeply struck, with her beauty. He acknowledged the truth of Peter's words. Eleanor's loveliness was without parallel. He had seen nought so fair, and the instant he beheld her, he felt that for *her* alone could he have cancelled his vows to Sybil. The spirit of rivalry and jealousy was therefore instantly aroused, by Eleanor's exclamations.

"His elder brother!" echoed Eleanor, dwelling upon his words, and addressing Luke—"then you must be—but no, you are not, you cannot be—it is Ranulph's title—it is not your's—you are not——"

"I am Sir Luke Rookwood," replied Luke, proudly.

Ere the words were uttered, Eleanor had fainted.

"Assistance is at hand, Madam, if you will accept it, and follow me," said Luke, raising the insensible girl in his arms, and bearing her down the hill towards the encampment, whither he was followed by Mrs. Mowbray and the Priest, between whom, during the hurried dialogue which we have detailed, very significant glances had been exchanged. Turpin, who, as it may be supposed, had not been an incurious observer at what was passing, burst into his usual loud laugh, on seeing Luke bear away his lovely burthen.

"Cousin! Ha, ha!" said he. "So the wench is his cousin. Damme, but I half suspect that

he has fallen in love with his new-found cousin; and if so, Miss Sybil, or I'm mistaken, will look as yellow as a bean*. If that little Spanish devil gets it into her pretty jealous pate, that he is about to bring home a new mistress, we shall have a tragedy scene, in the twinkling of a bed-post. However, I shan't lose sight of Sir Luke, until I have settled my accounts with him. Hark ye, boy," continued he, addressing the postillion, "remain where you are; you won't be wanted yet awhile, I imagine. There's a guinea for you, to drink Dick Turpin's health."

Upon which, he mounted his mare, and walked her easily down the hill.

"And so that be Dick Turpin, folks talk so much about," quoth the lad, looking curiously after him; "well, he's as civil speaking a chap as need be, blow my boots if he ain't; and if I'd had a notion it were he, I'd have stopped at first call, without more ado. Nothing like expe-

* Guinea.

rience—I shall know better another time," added he, pocketing the shiner.

Rushing swiftly down the hill, Luke tarried at the river's brink, to sprinkle some of the cool element upon the pale brow of Eleanor. As he held her in his arms, thoughts which he fain would have stifled in their birth took possession of his heart. "Would she were mine!" murmured he. "Yet no—the wish is unworthy." But that wish returned unbidden.

Eleanor opened her eyes. She was still too weak to walk without support, and Luke, raising her once more in his arms, and motioning Mrs. Mowbray to follow, crossed the brook by means of stepping stones, and conducted his charge along a bye-path towards the Priory, so as to avoid meeting with the crew assembled upon the green.

They had gained one of the roofless halls, when he encountered Balthazar. Astonished at the sight of the party, the Patrico was about to address the Priest as an acquaintance, when his more orthodox brother raised his finger to his

lips, in token of caution. The action passed unobserved.

"Hie thee to Sybil," said Luke to the Patrico. "Bid her haste hither. Say that this maiden—that Eleanor Mowbray is here, and requires her aid—fly. I will bear her to the refectory."

As Balthazar passed the Priest, he pointed with a significant glance towards a chasm in the wall, which seemed to be an opening to some subterraneous chamber. The father again made a gesture of silence, and Balthazar hastened upon his mission.

Luke led them to the refectory; he brought a chair for Eleanor's support; but so far from reviving after such attention as could be afforded her, she appeared to become weaker. He was about to issue forth in search of Sybil, when to his surprise he found the door fastened.

"Our orders are, that you do not pass this way," said a voice, which Luke instantly recognized as that of the Knight of Malta.

"Not pass!" echoed Luke. "What does this mean?"

"Our orders are from the Queen," returned the Knight.

At this instant the low tolling of a muffled bell was heard.

"The bell!" exclaimed Luke; "some danger is at hand."

His heart smote him, as he thought of Sybil, and he looked anxiously towards Eleanor.

Balthazar rushed into the room.

"Where is Sybil?" cried Luke. "Will she not come?"

"She will be here anon," answered the Patrico.

"I will seek her myself then," said Luke. "The door by which you entered is free."

"It is *not* free," replied Balthazar. "Remain where you are."

"Remain here," echoed Luke. "Who will prevent my going forth?"

"I will," said Barbara Lovel, as she suddenly appeared in the door-way. "You stir

not, excepting at my pleasure. Where is the maiden?" continued she, looking around with a grim smile of satisfaction at the consternation produced by her appearance. "Ha! I see—she faints. Here is a cordial that shall revive her. Mrs. Mowbray, you are welcome to the Gipsies' dwelling—you and your daughter; and you, Sir Luke Rookwood, I congratulate you upon your accession of dignity." Turning to the priest, who was evidently overwhelmed with confusion, she exclaimed, "Think you I know not Richard Checkley? We have met, ere this, at Rookwood. Know you not Barbara Lovel? Ha, ha! It is long since my poor dwelling has been so highly honoured. But I must not delay the remedy. Give her to drink of this," said she, giving a phial to Mrs. Mowbray. "It will instantly restore her."

"It is poison," cried Luke, "she shall not drink it."

"Poison!" reiterated Barbara. "Behold!" and she drank of the liquid. "I would not poison thy bride," added she, turning to Luke.

"My bride?" echoed Luke.

"Ay, thy bride;" repeated Barbara.

Luke recoiled in amazement. Mrs. Mowbray almost felt inclined to believe she was a dreamer, so visionary did the whole scene appear. A dense crowd of witnesses stood at the entrance. Foremost amongst them was the Sexton. Suddenly a shriek was heard, and the crowd opening, to allow her passage, Sybil rushed forward.

CHAPTER VII.

Well, go thy ways, old Nick Machiavel, there will never be the peer of thee for wholesome policy and good counsel: thou took'st pains to chalk men out the dark paths and hidden plots of murther and deceit, and no man has the grace to follow thee. The age is unthankful, thy principles are quite forsaken, and worn out of memory.

SHAKERLEY MARMION'S ANTIQUARY.

SYBIL's sudden entrance filled the group that surrounded Miss Mowbray with new dismay. But she saw them not. Her soul seemed riveted by Eleanor, towards whom she rushed; and while her eye wandered over her beauty, she raised the braided hair from her brow, revealing the clear, polished forehead. Wonder, awe, devotion, pity, usurped the place of hatred. The fierce expression that had lit up her dark orbs, was succeeded by tender commiseration. She looked an imploring appeal at Barbara.

"Ay, ay," returned the old gipsy, extending at the same time the phial; "I understand.

Here is that will bring the blood once more into her pallid cheeks, and kindle the fire within her eyes. Give her of this."

"*This!*" echoed Sybil, regarding the phial with distrust.

"Ay, this," retorted Barbara, "and quickly. Why dost pause? Do it, and waste not a drop of the precious potion—'tis the drink of life."

"Of *life eternal*, perchance," said Sybil, still hesitating.

Mrs. Mowbray vainly endeavoured to restore her child to animation. Seriously alarmed, she now called loudly for assistance.

"Go, I command thee; give her of the cordial," said Barbara, with a meaning gesture. "My hand shakes, or I would minister to her aid myself."

"Fear nothing," said Luke, approaching them; "'tis, as she says, a cordial; delay may endanger Miss Mowbray's recovery."

"And do you likewise command me to do it?" asked Sybil, reproachfully, of Luke.

Luke signified his assent, and, without further

remonstrance, she obeyed. The effect of the potion was almost instantaneous, amply attesting Barbara's skill in its concoction. Stifled respiration first proclaimed Eleanor's recovery. She opened her large and languid eyes—her bosom heaved almost to bursting—her pulses throbbed quickly and feverishly; and, as the stimulant operated, the wild lustre of excitement blazed in her eyes.

Sybil took her hand to chafe it. The eyes of the two maidens met. They gazed upon each other stedfastly and in silence. Eleanor knew not whom she regarded, but she could not mistake that look of sympathy—she could not mistake the tremulous pressure of her hand—she felt the silent trickling tears. She returned the sympathising glance, and gazed with equal wonder upon the ministering fairy, for such she almost seemed, that knelt before her. Lovely it was, to see these two fair creatures together, alike in beauty, yet how different in its expression! Day and night could not be more opposite. Each was equally enchanted with the other.

Looks speak as plainly as words, nay plainer; they tell what words cannot, what words dare not—they talk from the heart, whereas the lips often speak the language of constraint. The eyes of youth seldom belie the feelings; and how much may not a glance convey! In this instance it spoke volumes on both sides.

As Eleanor's looks wandered from the kindly glance of Sybil, to the withered and inauspicious aspect of the Gipsy Queen, who, in her strange and fantastical gear looked like the baleful witch Mara, and shifted thence to the dusky gnome-like figures of her gipsy gang, looming in the twilight entrance, like familiars of the sorceress—as she gazed upon these wild objects, she exclaimed, "Who are these, and where am I?"

"You are in safety," replied Luke. "This is the ruined Priory of St. Francis; and those strange personages are a horde of gipsies. You need fear no injury from them."

"My deliverer!" murmured Eleanor; when all at once the recollection that he had avowed

himself a Rookwood, and the elder brother of Ranulph, flashed across her memory. "Gipsies! did you not say these people were gipsies? Your own attire is the same as their's—You are not, cannot be the brother of Ranulph."

"I do not boast the same mother," returned Luke, proudly, "but my father was Sir Piers Rookwood, and I am his elder born."

He turned away. Dark thoughts swept across his brain. Maddened by the beauty of Eleanor, stung by her slights, and insensible to the silent agony of Sybil, who sought in vain to catch his eye, but who spoke not, he thought of nothing but of revenge, and the accomplishment of his purposes. All within was a wild and fearful turmoil. His better principles were chained down by the onward promptings of evil. "That prophecy," said he——"But that is nought. Yet Barbara called her my bride—*my* bride! Oh that it were so!—Would that I could call her mine—would that she loved me in lieu of Ranulph. He is my brother; yet I have no brotherly love towards him; and

if that prophecy should be truth, and with her he should wrest from me my newly-acquired possessions, my happiness would be wrecked. But this shall never be.—She is here—she is mine—she *shall* be mine. And Sybil—what of her? A stunning, yelling demon, shouts within, and drowns the cries of conscience. Methinks, if the tempter were near at hand, to offer that maiden to me, even at the peril of my soul's welfare, I could not resist it."

The tempter *was* at hand. He is seldom absent on occasions like the present. The Sexton stood beside his grandson. Luke started—he eyed Peter from head to foot, almost expecting to find the cloven foot, supposed to be proper to the fiend. Peter grinned in ghastly derision.

"So ho! thou wouldst summon hell to thine aid; and lo, the devil is at thine elbow. Pshaw! look not startled, man. I am no dealer in the black art—I am no fiend, or familiar of fiend, or aught unearthly in the guise of earth. I am a mere creature of clay, like thyself; but I can

render thee all the aid thou could'st derive from powers of darkness. She is thine."

"Mine!" echoed Luke, wildly. "Peter Bradley—grandsire—man—fiend—be thou what thou mayest, for I can hardly think thee human, trifle not with me; I am in no mood for it; I am distracted. Thou hast kindled wildfire in my heart, it scorches, it burns."

"He has it," muttered Peter, regarding him fixedly for a moment. "The dark delusion of his race is upon him. He is doomed, like the rest."

"Devil! didst thou not say she should be mine?"

"Spare thy nick-names. I repeat it.—'She shall be thine.'"

"Make good thy words," cried Luke impatiently.

"Softly—softly," returned Peter. The bird is snared; it can only flutter; it cannot escape. Moderate thyself, and thy wishes shall be accomplished. Thine own desires chime with those of others; nay, with those of Barbara. *She* would

wed thee to Miss Mowbray. Thou starest. But it is so. This is but a cover for some deeper plot; no matter. It shall go hard, despite her cunning, if I foil her not at her own weapons. There is more mischief in that old woman's brain than was ever hatched within the crocodile's egg; but she shall find her match. Do not thwart her; leave all to me. She is about it now," added he, noticing Barbara and Mrs. Mowbray in conference together. "Be patient —I will watch her." And he quitted his grandson for the purpose of scanning more closely the manœuvres of the old gipsy.

Barbara, meanwhile, had not remained inactive.

"You need fear no relapse in your daughter, I will answer for that," said the old gipsy to Mrs. Mowbray; "Sybil will tend her. Quit not the maiden's side," continued she, addressing her grandchild, adding, in a whisper, "Be cautious—alarm her not—mine eye will be upon thee—drop not a word."

So saying, she shuffled to a little distance with Mrs. Mowbray, keeping Sybil in view,

and watching every motion, as the panther might watch the gambols of the fawn from out its lair.

"Know you who speaks to you?" said the old crone, in the peculiar low and confidential tone assumed by her tribe to strangers. "Have you forgotten the name of Barbara Lovel?"

"I have no distinct remembrance of it," returned Mrs. Mowbray.

"Think again," said Barbara; "and though years are flown, you may perchance recall the black gipsy woman, who, when you were surrounded by gay gallants, with dancing plumes, lordlings, and gentles of high degree, perused your palm, and whispered in your ear the favoured suitor's name. 'Bide with me a moment, Madam," said Barbara, seeing that Mrs. Mowbray shrank from the recollection thus conjured up, "I am old—very old, I have survived the shows of flattery, and, being vested with a power over my people, am apt, perchance, to take too much upon myself with others." The old gipsy paused here, and then, assuming

a more haughty manner, exclaimed, "The estates of Rookwood are ample——"

"Ha!"

"They should have been your's, lady, and would have been, but for that marriage. You would have beseemed them bravely. But Sir Reginald was wilful, and erased the daughter's name to substitute that of his son. Pity it is that so fair a creature as Miss Mowbray should lack the dower her beauty and her birth entitle her to expect. Pity that Ranulph Rookwood should lose those lands and titles, at the moment when he deemed they were dropping into his possession. Pity that those broad lands should pass away from you and from your children, as they will do, if Ranulph and Eleanor are united."

"They never shall be united," replied Mrs. Mowbray, hastily surprised out of her caution.

"'Twere indeed to wed thy child to beggary," said Barbara.

Mrs. Mowbray sighed deeply.

"There is a way," continued the old crone,

"by which the estates might still be her's, and thine."

"How?" asked Mrs. Mowbray, eagerly.

"Sir Piers Rookwood had two sons."

"Ha!"

"The elder is here."

"Luke—Sir Luke. He brought us hither."

"He loves your daughter. I saw his gaze of passion just now. I am old now, but I have some skill in lovers' glances. Why not wed her to him? I read hearts, you know."

"But," returned Mrs. Mowbray, with hesitation, "though I might wish for—though I might sanction this, Eleanor is betrothed to Ranulph—she loves him."

"Think not of *her*, if *you* are satisfied. She cannot judge so well for herself as you can for her. She is but a child—she knows not what she loves. Her affection will soon be Luke's. He is a noble youth—the image of his grandfather, your father, Sir Reginald; and if she be betrothed to any one, 'twas to the heir of Rookwood. Why should the marriage not take place at once, and here?"

"Here?"

"Even *here*. Depart, and Ranulph and she may meet—your plans may be overthrown. You are within sacred walls. I will take you where even an altar stands. There is no lack of holy priest to join their hands together. Your companion, Master Richard Checkley, or by whatever other name he calls himself, will do the office fittingly. He has essayed his clerkly skill already on others of your house."

"To what do you allude, mysterious woman?" asked Mrs. Mowbray, with anxiety.

"To Sir Piers and Susan Bradley," returned Barbara.

"Ha! did he unite them? He never told me this."

"He dared not do so; he had an oath which bound him to concealment; but death has now absolved him. The time is coming when greater mysteries may be revealed."

"'Tis strange I should not have heard of this before," said Mrs. Mowbray, musingly; "and yet I might have guessed as much, from his

obscure hints respecting Ranulph. I see it all now. I see the gulf into which I might have plunged; but I am warned in time. Father Ambrose," continued she to the priest, who was pacing the chamber at some little distance from them, "is it true that my brother was wedded by you to Susan Bradley?"

Ere the priest could reply, the Sexton presented himself.

"Ha, the very father of the girl!" said Mrs. Mowbray, "whom I met within our family vault, and who was so strangely moved when I spoke to him of Alan Rookwood. Is he here likewise?"

"Alan Rookwood!" echoed Barbara, upon whom a light seemed suddenly to break, "Ha! what said he of him?"

"Ill boding raven," interposed Peter, fiercely; "be content with what thou knowest of the living, and trouble not the repose of the dead. Let them rest in their infamy."

"The dead," echoed Barbara, with a chuckling laugh; "ha, ha! he is dead then; and what became of his fair wife—his brother's minion?

'Twas a foul deed I grant, and yet there was expiation. Blood flowed—blood——"

"No blood—no blood," said Peter, with a dreadful look.

"No blood! ha, I forgot; the Rookwoods never *strike*. None since the first have done so; and what of Alan's daughter?"

"Silence, thou night hag," thundered Peter, "or I will have thee burned at the stake, for the sorcery thou practisest. Beware," added he, in a deep tone, "I am thy friend."

Barbara's withered countenance exhibited for an instant the deepest indignation at the Sexton's threat. The malediction trembled on her tongue—she raised her staff to smite him, but she checked the action. In the same tone, but with a sharp, suspicious look, she answered, "My *friend*, sayest thou? See that it prove so, or beware of *me*."

And with a malignant scowl the Gipsy Queen slowly shuffled towards her satellites, who were stationed at the door.

CHAPTER VIII.

No marriage I esteem it, where the friends
Force love upon their children; where the virgin
Is not so truly given as betrayed.
I would not have betrothed people (for
I can by no means call them lovers), make
Their rites no wedlock, but a sacrifice.

COMBAT OF LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP.

MISS MOWBRAY had witnessed her mother's withdrawal from her side with infinite uneasiness, and was with difficulty prevented, by Sybil, from breaking upon her conference with the Gipsy Queen. Barbara's dark eye was fixed upon them during the whole of the interview, and communicated an indefinite sense of dread to Eleanor.

"Who—who is that old woman?" asked Eleanor, under her breath. "Never, even in my wildest dreams, have I seen aught so terrible. Why does she look so at us? She terrifies me; and yet she cannot mean me ill, or my mother—we have never injured her?"

"Alas!" sighed Sybil.

"You sigh," exclaimed Eleanor, in alarm. "Is there any real danger then? Help us to avoid it. Quick, warn my mother; she seems agitated. Oh, let me go to her."

"Hush!" whispered Sybil, maintaining an unmoved demeanour under the lynx-like gaze of Barbara. "Stir not, as you value your life—you know not where you are, or what may befal you. Your mother is not in danger. You alone have cause for fear."

"*I!*" exclaimed Eleanor, growing pale as death, and with difficulty repressing a scream. "Why should danger alight on me? What have I done? What will you gain by injuring me? Not you I fear, but her,—that terrible old woman, who glances at us, like a hungry wolf. Tell me —tell me, how am I in danger. Do not hold me —let me go to my mother; or lead me forth into the open air—any where but *here*."

"Command yourself, Lady, I entreat you," said Sybil, "as you value your life,—let not the trembling of a nerve, if you can controul it,

betray your apprehension; your safety depends upon your composure. Your life is not in danger; but what is dearer than life, your love, is threatened with a fatal blow. There is a dark design to wed you to another."

"Heavens!" ejaculated Eleanor, "and to whom?"

"To Sir Luke Rookwood."

"I would die sooner! Marry *him?* They shall kill me, ere they force me to it!"

"Could you not love him?"

"Love him! I loathe him; I have only seen him within this hour—I knew not of his existence—he rescued me from peril—I would thank him—I would love him if I could, for Ranulph's sake; and yet for Ranulph's sake I hate him."

"Speak not of him thus to me," said Sybil, angrily. "If *you* love him not, *I* love him. Oh! forgive me, lady; pardon my impatience—my heart is breaking, yet it has not ceased to beat for him. You say you will die sooner than consent to this forced union. Here are the means," and, unperceived by Barbara, she

placed the poignard within the folds of Eleanor's bosom.

"I would rather die than wed him," said Eleanor, shuddering; "but this is a dreadful alternative. Take back your dagger—I dare not use it."

"And you love Ranulph?"

"I dare not die—I shrink from self-destruction—my hand trembles, even while I touch the steel."

"Yet keep it; the moment may arrive when you will clutch it firmly."

"Oh, no. *You* may view death with indifference—I never can; not even Love can disarm it of its terrors. Life is very dear to me."

"Dearer than your lover!" said Sybil, with ill disguised scorn.

"Ranulph is true to me—he loves me," said Eleanor—"I cling to hope, as to existence."

"True, true," returned Sybil; "you are not all desolate as I am. Give me the dagger—go to your mother—I will protect you. If there must be a victim, I will be the sacrifice—God

grant I may be the only one. Be happy—as happy as I am wretched. You shall see what the love of a gipsy can do."

Sybil took the poignard, and burst into a flood of passionate tears. Eleanor regarded her with the deepest commiseration; but the feeling was transient; for Barbara, now advancing, exclaimed, "Hence, to thy mother. The bridegroom is waiting; to thy mother, girl!" and she motioned Eleanor fiercely away. "What means this?" continued the old gipsy. "What hast thou said to that girl? Did I not caution thee against speech with her? and thou hast dared to disobey me. Thou, my grandchild—the daughter of my Agatha, with whom my slightest wish was law! I abandon thee!—I curse thee——"

"Oh, curse me not!" cried Sybil. "Add not to my despair."

"Then follow my advice implicitly—know thyself—cast off this weakness—all is in readiness. He shall descend into the vaulted chapel; the ceremony shall there take place—there also

shall she die—and there again shalt thou be wedded——"

"To death!" groaned Sybil.

"Take this phial," continued Barbara;—"place it within the folds of thy girdle. When all is over, I will tell thee when to use it. Be firm—be true—I will remove all obstacles; thou wilt have no fear of rivalry—all will then be over."

"It will indeed be over," muttered Sybil. "And have you no pity for youth and innocence?"

"None! when they interfere with my purposes."

"No fear for the consequences of crimes so dreadful?"

"None—the guilt—the punishment—be mine—I will brave all—I will fulfil my word. Thou shouldst be Lady Rookwood, were the title to be purchased by the blood of all their line. Art thou prepared? shall we set out?"

"I am—I am prepared," replied Sybil, in accents hollow as despair; "but let me speak with Luke before we go."

"To what end?"

"Grant me this request, I beseech you, mother—this last request, and ask me not my motive. I will obey you in all else; leave us an instant together."

"Be brief then—each moment is precious. Go to him. He is yonder. Keep a guard upon thy tongue. I will to Mrs. Mowbray. Stay. Thou hast placed the phial in safety. A drop will free thee from thy troubles."

"'Tis in that hope I guard it," replied Sybil, as she departed in the direction of Luke. Barbara watched her join her faithless lover, and then turned shortly towards Mrs. Mowbray and her daughter.

Luke was alone. The Sexton remained in earnest converse with Mrs. Mowbray and the Priest. Peter had instilled his venom—he left it to operate: he had others besides Luke upon whom to practise. Luke meanwhile, with hasty step, paced the further end of the apartment. From time to time he cast anxious glances at Sybil and Eleanor. As he regarded the former, he felt the bitterest remorse at

his conduct, internally execrating himself for his cruelty and hardness of heart, yet did he lack the resolution to avow his penitence, and implore her forgiveness. This feeling of compunction was, however, short lived. He looked at Eleanor, and Sybil's image was obliterated.

"You are ill, dear Luke," said Sybil, who had silently approached him, "very ill."

"Ill!" echoed Luke, breaking into frantic laughter. "Ill!—Ha! ha!—upon my wedding day.—No—I am well—well. Your eyes are jaundiced by jealousy."

"Jealousy! Luke—Luke, this from you. Laugh not thus.—It terrifies me; I shall think you insane. Such laughter is ghastly—such levity fiendish. There, you are calmer—you are more like yourself—more *human*. You looked just now—Oh God! that I should say it of you—as if you were possessed by devils."

"And if I were possessed, what then?"

"What then? Horrible! Hint not at it. You almost make me credit the dreadful tales

I have heard, that on their wedding-day the Rookwoods are subject to the power of the Evil One."

"Upon their wedding-day—and I look thus?"

"You do—you do. Oh! cast it from you."

"She is mine—she is mine—I care not, though fiends possess me, so it be my wedding-day—and thou sayst I look like a Rookwood—ha, ha!"

"That wild laughter again. Luke, I implore thee, hear me one word—my last——"

"I will not hear reproaches."

"I mean not to reproach you. I came to bless you—to forgive you—to bid you farewell. Will you not say farewell?"

"Farewell."

"Not so—not so—mercy, my God! compassionate him and me—my heart will break with agony—Luke, if you would not kill me, recall that word. Let not the guilt of my death be your's. 'Tis to save you from *that*, that I die."

"Die!"

"*For* you; but oh! let it not be *by* you."

"Sybil, you have said rightly—I am not myself—I know not what demons have possession of my soul, that I can behold your agonies without remorse—that your matchless affection should awaken no return; but so it is. Since the fatal moment when I beheld yon maid, I have loved her."

"Loved her!" gasped Sybil.

"Wildly—desperately."

"No more. *Now* I can part with you—farewell."

"Stay, stay—wretch that I am—stay, Sybil. If we must part, and that it *must* be so I feel, let me receive your pardon, if you can bestow it. Let me clasp you once more within my arms. May you live to happier days—may you——"

"Oh, to die thus!" sobbed Sybil, disengaging herself from his embrace. "Live to happier days, saidst thou, Luke? When have I given thee reason to doubt, for an instant, the sincerity of *my* love, that thou shouldst venture to insult me thus?

"Then live with me—live for me."

"Live for thee," echoed Sybil. "If thou canst love me still, I will live for thee—as thy slave—thy minion—thy wife—aught that thou wilt have me be. Thou hast raised me from wretchedness. Oh," continued she, in an altered tone, "have I mistaken thy meaning? saidst thou those words in false compassion for my sufferings? —speak—it is not yet too late—all may be well. My fate—my life, is in thy hands. If thou lovest me yet—if thou canst forsake Eleanor, speak—if not, be silent."

Luke averted his head.

"Enough!" continued Sybil, in a voice of agony; "I understand—may God forgive thee. Fare thee well—we shall meet no more."

"Do we part for ever?" asked Luke, without daring to regard her.

"For ever," answered Sybil.

Before her lover could reply, she shot from his side, and disappeared from his view. Swifter almost than thought, she plunged amidst the dark and dense assemblage near the door. Amongst the crowd she discovered the

face of one upon whose fidelity she could depend, were it to peril life for her welfare, and the boon which Sybil was about to ask might endanger the safety of any one who should concede it. That she felt, but it was not a moment for hesitation.

Her attendant, Handassah, was the individual whom she beheld. In eager tremulous whisper she breathed in her ears these words—"Handassah, may I trust in thee?"

The faithful hand-maiden instantly signified her ready acquiescence.

"Come with me then behind yon projection of the wall—we are unseen—give me thy cloak—quick—quick—none observe us amidst this confusion—Barbara is engaged now—give me thy kerchief, girl—there, I have bound it round my temples—do I look like thee, Handassah? My God! look not thou like me—I would have none other so miserable. Thou art of my own size, and of my complexion. *We*, gipsy girls, are all of one complexion; and thine eyes, *he* said, they were like mine; but thou hast not my hair—no; but thou shalt have;" and with her poignard's

point the wretched maiden severed her luxuriant and braided tresses, and gave them to Handassah. "Attach these useless bands to thine own—fasten them so—keep them hereafter, for my sake—*he* once loved them, Handassah; but that is gone. Robe thyself within this shawl, as is the custom of our race when in affliction—muffle thy face within it—haply thou mayest escape the scrutiny of Barbara—at least till all be over."

This exchange of attire, though effected with wonderful promptitude by Handassah, who looked in her disguise a very counterpart of her mistress, had not been altogether unperceived by some of her band. Luckily the proceeding was hidden from Barbara's view; nor were they who witnessed it disposed to betray the confidence she involuntarily placed in them. Sybil was beloved by all, and her escape gladly connived at. In the apparel of Handassah, she gained the door, and though in her own person her departure would have been refused, she was allowed to go forth in her present disguise.

She emerged into the open air—she stood

within the roofless hall—it was filled with sunshine — with the fresh breath of morn. The ivied ruins, the grassy floor, the blue vault of heaven, seemed to greet her with a benignant smile—all was *riant* and rejoicing, —all, save *her*. Amid such brightness, her sorrow seemed harsh and unnatural; and as she felt the glad influence of day, she was scarce able to refrain from tears, but she *did* refrain. The effort was heart-breaking—it was terrible to leave this beautiful world—that blue sky—that sunshine—and all she loved—so young, so soon.

Entering the low arch, that yawned within the wall, to which we have before alluded, she vanished like a ghost at the approach of morn.

CHAPTER IX.

Thou hast practised on her with foul charms—
Abused her delicate youth with drugs and minerals.

SHAKSPEARE—OTHELLO.

AMONGST those who had noticed Sybil's metamorphosis and departure, was Jerry Juniper, and he had remarked it not without some uneasiness; for if truth must be told, the black eyes of the pretty brunette, Handassah, had been the loadstars which attracted the caper merchant's son towards the patterers of Romany, and detained him amongst their tents. Handassah was neither a coquette nor a flirt—she requited Jerry's passion, and for such a fickle personage, Juniper was more constant than might have been anticipated. Three moons, however, had only revolved over their *liaison!*

"What the devil are you about, my dear?" said he, becoming serious, though he could not, under any circumstances, divest himself of his slang and swagger—"It's as much as your life is worth to do what you have done. I won't answer for the consequences, if Barbara's hawk's eye penetrates your disguise. Why need you meddle in this matter? If Barbara has made up her mind, I should as soon think of opposing the arch Queen of Beelzebuth as attempt to interfere with her."

"Hush, hush—be quiet," returned Handassah, "I am frightened enough already, without your adding to my terror; but I will risk any thing for Sybil. If you love me, keep near, and contrive, if possible, to interpose your person between me and Barbara, whenever she looks in my direction."

"I will do my best, certainly," answered Jerry; "but it will be confoundedly awkward, and still more unpleasant, if any unexpected éclaircissement should take place. For my part, I can't conceive what's to come of all this mystery and manœuvring. But never fear, girl;

I'll stand by you, and by Sybil too, should need be," added he, affecting a sympathy which we are sorry to say he did not feel. "Hist! Barbara calls for Sybil, that's you—you know now—keep behind me. I won't indulge her with a more particular view of your pretty face than I can possibly help. You ask *if* I love you? see what risks I am prepared to run for you: let my present conduct be my answer."

With fear and trembling Handassah advanced, Jerry hovering before her in his jaunty fashion, chuckling and spreading himself out like a turkey guarding its chick from an adverse brood. All his dexterity and assurance were needed to shelter her from Barbara's scrutiny; and it is probable that, but for the libations he had swallowed, even Jerry's impudence might have failed him at this critical conjuncture. Barbara was in no mood for trifling. He saw in an instant, by her eye, the ticklish situation in which he stood; but he could not in honour slink back. So he floundered forward; but his

laughter changed to somewhat of that sort which is vulgarly described as being "on the wrong side of one's mouth," as he stood close beside the Gipsy Queen. After all, what a glorious thing is assurance! It carries all before it—It is the greatest privilege of genius. Jerry nodded slightly, not daring to make a salutation more profound, for fear of betraying his mistress.

"I called for Sybil. What wouldst thou? ha—;" cried Barbara, in a tone that showed him plainly enough that any pleasantry he might attempt would be ill-timed. The joke he had meditated, died away upon his lips.

"It is ill playing with edged tools," thought Jerry.

"Where is Sybil?" asked Barbara.

"She is here," replied Jerry.—"All's up," muttered he. "What the devil shall I do?"

"Art thou her spokesman," said Barbara. "Stand aside."

"Might I have a moment's speech with you?" continued Jerry, struggling to maintain his ground.

"Not now—well what is't? speak quickly, thou pertinacious knave."

"It concerns yourself."

"Out with it then."

"This marriage."

"Ha?"

"The crew murmur."

"Murmur—ha—"

"Not exactly murmur—I am wrong; but they talk. You understand,—they talk. You know what I mean by *talking*. They know you are a wonderfully wise woman; that you have more in you than half of your sex put together—they admit all this—they are prepared, like good and faithful lieges, to do whatever you bid them, and ask no questions; but still they don't *exactly* see how marrying Sybil's lover to her rival can benefit either her or you. Perhaps you will deign to give them some explanation."

"Explanation! ha—dost thou chaffer with them thus? I know thee, sirrah. Thou art not one of us. Thou art not gipsy born. I have marked thee. A marriage, saidst thou? Thou

shalt have another marriage of my making, besides this, to talk of. Thou hast trifled with the affections of one of the daughters of my people — with Handassah. The wench must have been a weak fool indeed to credit the professions of such a one as thou art, better men have ineffectually besought her—howbeit, as she wishes it, she shall wed thee."

"Wish it, Madam, she does *not* wish it. I am perfectly persuaded that you could not do Handassah greater displeasure than to marry her to me."

Handassah heard it all, and longed to throw herself at Barbara's feet, and acknowledge the justice of her sentence; but *that* was impossible; and the faithful handmaiden could only heave a deep sigh, and bewail her lover's inconstancy.

"And thou deniest all intimacy with her?"

"All intimacy of the sort you allude to, Madam, certainly."

Handassah heaved a deeper sigh. It reached the ears of Barbara.

"'Tis false," returned the Gipsy Queen.

"Handassah hath avowed her love, and her fears of thee, to Sybil—beseeching my interference in her behalf. Is it not so, Sybil? Said she not this to thee?"

"Her silence contradicts it. There must be some mistake. Were Handassah here, she would readily refute the charge. Sybil must have misunderstood her. She tacitly acknowledges her error. It is astonishing what ill consequences arise from misapprehensions of this sort. My attentions were of the most trifling kind; such as a man of gallantry must pay to every pretty girl. I may have said more than I meant—who can always command his speech?"

"Not thou, I am sure," returned Barbara; "thou shalt wed her, or I will have thee scourged through the camp, till not an ounce of flesh shall hang upon thy bones. Speak, Sybil—Handassah's fate rests with thee."

"Madam, I assure you she cannot speak——you only embarrass her;—Handassah would only be committed by any indiscretion on her part—and Sybil be betrayed into difficulties."

Jerry threw as much meaning as he dared into his speech, in hopes that Handassah would take the hint. The situation of both parties was, it must be owned, sufficiently embarrassing: Jerry, however, conducted himself throughout with very considerable nonchalance.

"This is strange," muttered Barbara. "What can Sybil's silence mean? Retire, sirrah, I will consult with her."

"Whatever she may say, Madam," replied the unblushing Juniper, "she will sooner be able to convict me of designs against herself than——"

"Peace! Come hither, Sybil?"

"Faint, my charmer," cried Jerry, turning towards her; "faint, or we are dished entirely."

"Perfidious wretch," replied Handassah; "I will scratch your eyes out, you vile monster, on the first seasonable opportunity."

"Faint in the meantime, or all's up with Sybil," returned Jerry, with delectable coolness.

Handassah accordingly uttered one of those hysterical screams which many of her sex have ready for occasions like the present, and falling

into Jerry's arms, buried her face in his bosom, contriving, at the same time, to give him a very severe pinch, which the delinquent endured with the resignation of a martyr.

"Poor thing, she struggles shockingly," cried Jerry, with admirably-affected alarm; "it must be a fit—how excessively unlucky."

"Unlucky indeed," exclaimed Barbara; "the girl's weakness will destroy my fairest plans. Call Handassah to her assistance."

"Had I not better bear her into the open air—she will never recover here, I am persuaded."

"Do so. Thy life be answerable for thy charge. Stay—bear her at once to the vaulted chapel. Let Handassah go with thee."

"She shall go with me, depend upon it," answered Jerry, bearing her off in triumph, somewhat allayed by the scene which he anticipated in private.

To return to Miss Mowbray.—In a state of mind bordering upon distraction, Eleanor rushed to her mother, and, flinging her arms wildly round her neck, besought her to protect

her. Mrs. Mowbray was deeply touched by her daughter's distress. What mother could be otherwise? she was alarmed at her frantic manner, at the words she uttered, and which, though incoherent, were not to be mistaken. She folded Eleanor to her bosom, and sought, by every means in her power, to restore her to calmness. Eleanor became calm; but her terrors returned as she looked around.

"Mother, dear mother," said she, at length, "I have been a timid creature ever; but I have hitherto been spared the consciousness of my own weakness. With you near me, I have never, as yet, known what it has been to be afraid; but now I fear even you will lack the power to aid me. What will your single arm avail against yon fearful band, were you to raise it in my defence? They will murder me, mother, in your presence."

"Who do you fear, my child?"

"I know not whom, and scarcely what, I have to dread," said Eleanor. "All seem to desert me —even my reason."

Mrs. Mowbray gazed anxiously upon the altered countenance of her daughter, but a few moments relieved her from much of her uneasiness. The expression of pain gradually subsided, and the look of vacuity was succeeded by one of frenzied excitement. A film had, for an instant or two, dimmed her eyes—they now gleamed with unnatural lustre. She smiled—the smile was singular; it was not the playful, pleasurable lighting up of the face that it used to be; but it *was* a smile, and the mother's heart was satisfied.

Mrs. Mowbray knew not to what circumstance she could attribute this wondrous change. She looked at the Priest standing beside them—he was equally surprised; but he was more apt in divining the probable cause of the sudden alteration in Eleanor's manner.

"What if she have swallowed a love powder?" said he, approaching Mrs. Mowbray, and speaking in a whisper. "I have heard of such abominable mixtures; indeed, the holy St. Jerome himself relates an instance of similar sorcery, in

his life of Hilarius; and these people are said to compound them."

"It may be so," replied Mrs. Mowbray in the same tone. "I think that that peculiar softness in the eye is more than natural."

"I will at least hazard an experiment, to attest the truth or fallacy of my supposition," returned the Father. "I have heard that those who have drank of these philters conceive a sudden and irresistible passion for him they gaze upon while under the influence of the potion. I will direct her attention to the youth. See'st thou thy destined bridegroom yonder?" continued he, addressing Eleanor.

She followed with her eyes in the direction which Father Ambrose pointed. She beheld Luke. We know not how to describe the sensations which now possessed her. She thought not of Ranulph; or if she did, it was with vague indifference. Wrapped in a kind of mental trance, she yielded to the pleasurable impulse, which directed her unsettled fancies towards Luke. For some moments she did not

take her eyes from him. The Priest and Mrs. Mowbray watched her in silence.

Nothing passed between the party till Luke joined them. Eleanor continued gazing at him, and the seeming tenderness of her glance emboldened Luke to advance towards her. The soft fire that dwelt in those orbs was, however, cold as that which sparkles on the wing of the luciola.

Luke approached her; he took her hand—she withdrew it not. He kissed it—still she withdrew it not—but gazed at him with gently glimmering eyes.

"My daughter is your's, Sir Luke Rookwood," exclaimed Mrs. Mowbray.

"What says the maid herself?" asked Luke.

Eleanor answered not. Her eyes were still fixed on him.

"She will not refuse me her hand," said Luke.

"Ha! it is not Ranulph's hand!" screamed Eleanor, recoiling from his touch.

"Ranulph's?" echoed Luke, gloomily.

"You are aware of her attachment to your brother?" said Mrs. Mowbray.

"I am—time may conquer it. You give her to me, Madam?"

"I do."

"Enough," returned Luke, again taking Eleanor's hand. This time the victim resisted not.

"Benedicite," exclaimed the holy hypocrite.

"To the subterranean shrine," cried Barbara; and she gave the preconcerted signal to the band.

"There!" cried Luke, "why should it not take place here? these walls are hallowed."

"Within that chapel lived and died a saint," said Barbara, "there shall it be."

"It must not—it shall not take place there," said the Priest.

"What!—Do you refuse, Richard Checkley?" said Barbara, with a ghastly smile. "Dare you refuse *me*?—I say it shall take place there, or wheresoever else I please."

"You give strange license to your tongue.—"

"Wilt thou obey me?"

"Nay, let her have her way," whispered Peter. "I have prepared them."

"Are you ready?" asked Barbara. The Priest bowed reluctant assent.

The signal was repeated by the gipsy crew. Elevating a lighted torch over his head, the Knight of Malta drew Excalibur from its scabbard, and prepared to lead the way to the subterranean chapel. We may here casually note, that the crew had been by no means uninterested or silent spectators of passing events; but had, on the contrary, indulged themselves in a variety of conjectures as to their probable issue.

"Make way there—make way, palls, for the bride and bridegroom," cried the Knight of Malta.

The train began to move. Eleanor leaned upon the arm of her mother. Beside them stalked Barbara, with an aspect of triumph. Luke followed with the Priest. One by one the assemblage had quitted the apartment.

The Sexton alone lingered. "The moment is at hand," said he, musingly, "when all shall be consummated."

A few steps brought him into the court. The crowd was there still. A moment's delay had taken place. The Knight of Malta then entered the mouth of the vault. He held his torch so as to reveal a broken flight of steps, conducting, it would seem, to regions of perpetual night. So thought Eleanor, as she shudderingly gazed into the abyss. She hesitated—she trembled —she refused; but her mother's entreaties, and Barbara's threatening looks, induced, in the end, reluctant compliance. At length the place was empty. Peter was about to follow, when the sound of horses' hoofs broke upon his ear. He tarried for an instant, and the mounted figure of the Highwayman burst within the limits of the court.

"Ha, ha! old earthworm," cried Dick, "my Nestor of the churchyard, alone! where the devil are all the folks gone? Where's Sir Luke, and his new-found cousin, eh?"

Peter hastily explained.

"A wedding under ground? famous! the thing of all others I should like to see. I'll hang Bess to this ivy tod, and grub my way with you thither, old mole."

"You must stay here, and keep guard," returned Peter.

"Stay here! May I be hanged if I do, when such fun is going on."

"Hanged, in all probability, you will be," returned Peter; "but I should not, were I you, desire to anticipate my destiny. Stay here you must, and will, that's peremptory. You will be the gainer by it. Sir Luke will reward you nobly—I will answer for him. You can serve him most effectually. Ranulph Rookwood and Major Mowbray are expected here."

"The devil they are; but how, or why——"

"I have not time to explain. In case of a surprise, discharge a pistol—they must not enter the vault. Have you a whistle? for you must play a double part, and we may need your assistance below."

"Sir Luke may command me—here's a pipe as shrill as the devil's own cat-call."

"If it will summon you to our assistance below, 'tis all I need. May we rely on you?"

"Rely on *me?* When did Dick Turpin desert his friends? Any where on this side the

Styx the sound of that whistle will reach me. I'll ride about the court, and stand sentry."

"Enough," cried the Sexton, as he dived under ground.

"Take care of your shins," shouted Dick. "That's a cursed ugly turn, but he's used to the dark. A surprise, eh! I'll just give a look to my snappers—flints all safe. Now I'm ready for them, come when they like." And, having made the circuit of the place after the manner of the amphitheatrical Ducrow, he halted near the mouth of the subterranean chapel, to be within hearing of Peter's whistle, and throwing his right leg lazily over his saddle, proceeded coolly to light a short pipe (the luxury of the cigar being then unknown), humming the while snatches of a ballad, the theme of which was his own exploits.

As I was riding o'er Hounslow Moor,
I saw a lawyer trot on before;
So I rode up and asked if he was not afraid
To meet Dick Turpin, that mischievous blade.
To meet Dick Turpin, that mischievous blade.

Thus, between long-drawn whiffs did he chaunt —lapped in the smoker's dreamy elysium, with short pipe ruminant — his solitary song; and though apparently lost in forgetfulness, and listening to his own melody, he remained with one ear thrown back like that of the hare, on the alert for every sound. It was this power of abstraction which gave to our Highwayman that philosophic character which we have heretofore remarked, as distinguishing him beyond his fellow herd. When meditating his greatest exploits he appeared the most indifferent —when surrounded by danger he seemed the most insensible; yet it was not so. He was never, as he himself expressed it, "caught napping." He was ever ready to start to arms, yet lolled upon the cannon's breech. Whatever his existence might be, he made the most of it: He understood the *scavoir vivre* to perfection. Behold him now! How negligently his hat is set on one side of his head—yon Bond-street lounger could not have more of the look *fatuité*—yet Turpin, take our words for it, was neither a *fat* nor a

Bond-street lounger. His eyes are half closed; but a quick glance beams beneath the eyelids. His leg, equipped in that peculiarly-fashioned boot, which, in his day, obtained for it the name of the "Turpin top," and which was quite the rage amongst the sporting characters of the period, is thrown indolently and caressingly over the neck of his favourite mare; yet an instant will bring his foot to the stirrup—he looks the picture of repose. Reader, are you disposed to capture a Highwayman? Now is your moment—his eyes absolutely close—he nods—I feel assured he is asleep—approach him softly—there, now rush upon him—you have received a cursed kick from that black mare, and a voice thunders in your ear,

"DICK TURPIN NEVER SLEEPS!"

Never! for at this moment he resumes his song—

Says I, "All my money I've managed to pop
"Where no man will find it, beneath my boot-top."
Says the lawyer, "Dick Turpin my cash ne'er will find,
"For its sewed in the folds of my coat-cape behind;
"So I care not for Turpin, that mischievous blade."

Another whiff of the short pipe:

I rode till I came to the powder mill,
Where the smell of my pops made him soon stand still.
"My mare wants a new saddle-cloth," said I—
"Permit me the cape of your coat to try,
"For I am Dick Turpin, that mischievous blade*."

And thus, for the present, we leave him. O rare Dick Turpin!

* Music-sellers are respectfully informed that the copyright of this song is the entire property of that spirited publisher, Mr. Catnach, of Monmouth-court, Seven Dials.

CHAPTER X.

Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch' entrate.
DANTE.

CYPRIAN DE MULVERTON, fifth Prior of the Monastery of St. Francis, a prelate of singular sanctity, being afflicted, in his latter days, with a despondency so deep that neither penance nor fasting could remove it, vowed never again to behold, with earthly eyes, the blessed light of heaven, nor to dwell longer with his fellow men; but relinquishing his spiritual dignity, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot," to immure himself, while living, within the tomb.

He kept his vow. Out of the living rock that sustained the saintly structure, beneath the chapel of the monastery, was another chapel wrought, and thither, after bidding a solemn farewell to the world, and bestowing his benediction upon his flock, whom he committed to

the care of his successor, did the holy man retire.

Never, save at midnight, and then only during the performance of masses for his soul's repose, did he ascend from his cell; and as the sole light allowed within the dismal dungeon of his choice was that of a dim sepulchral lamp, as none spake with him when in his silent retreat, save in muttered syllables, what effect must the flash of lustre emanating from a thousand tapers, the warm and pungent odours of the incense-breathing shrine, contrasted with the chilly vapours of his prison-house, and the solemn swell of the *sanctus*, have had upon his excited senses? Surely they must have seemed like a foretaste of the heaven he sought to gain!

Ascetic to the severest point to which Nature's endurance could be stretched, he even denied himself repose. He sought not sleep, and knew it only when it stole on him unawares. His couch was the flinty rock; and long afterwards, when the zealous resorted to the sainted prior's cell, and were shown those sharp and jagged

stones, they marvelled how one like unto themselves, could rest or even recline upon their points without anguish, until it was explained to them that, doubtless, he who tempereth the wind to the shorn lamb had made that flinty couch soft to the holy sufferer as a bed of down. His limbs were clothed in a garb of horse-hair of the coarsest fabric; his drink, the dank drops that oozed from the porous walls of his cell; and his sustenance, such morsels as were bestowed upon him by the poor—the only strangers suffered to approach him. No fire was suffered, where perpetual winter reigned. None were admitted to his nightly vigils—none witnessed any act of penance—nor were any groans heard to issue from that dreary cave; but the knotted, blood-stained thong, discovered near his couch, too plainly betrayed in what manner those long, lone nights were spent. Thus did a year roll on. Traces of his sufferings were visible in his failing strength. He could scarcely crawl; but he meekly declined assistance. He appeared not, as had been his wont, at the midnight

mass; but the door of his cell was thrown open at that hour; the light streamed down like a glory upon his reverend head; he heard the distant reverberations of the deep *miserere;* and breathed odours as if wafted from Paradise.

One morn it chanced that they who sought his cell found him with his head upon his bosom kneeling before the benign image of the virgin patroness of his shrine. Fearing to disturb his devotions, they stood reverently looking on, and thus silently did they tarry for an hour; but, as in that space he had shown no signs of motion, fearing the worst, they ventured to approach him. He was cold as the marble before which he knelt. In the act of humblest intercession—it may be in the hope of grace, had his spirit fled.

"Blessed are they who die in the Lord," exclaimed his brethren, regarding his remains with deepest awe. On being touched, the body fell to the ground. It was little more than a skeleton.

Under the cloisters of the holy pile were his

bones interred with a degree of pomp and ostentation which but little accorded with the lowliness and self-abasement of this man of many sorrows.

This chapel, at the time of which we treat, was pretty much in the same condition as it existed in the days of its holy inmate. Hewn out of the entrails of the rock—the roof, the vaults, the floor, were of solid granite. Three huge cylindrical pillars, carved out of the native rock, rough as the stems of gnarled oak-trees, lent support to the ceiling. Support, however, was unneeded — an earthquake would scarce have shaken down those solid rafters. Only in one corner, where the water welled through a crevice of the rock, in drops that fell like tears, was decay manifest. Here the stone, worn by the constant dripping, had, in some places, given way. In shape, the vault was circular. The interval between each massive pillar formed a pointed arch. Again, from each pillar sprang other arches, which, crossed by diagonal, ogive branches, weaving one into the other, and radiating from the centre, formed those beauti-

fully intricate combinations upon which the eye of the enthusiast loves to linger. Within the ring formed by these triple columns, in which, again, the pillars had their own web of arches, was placed an altar of stone, and beside it a great crucifix of the same rude material. Here also stood the sainted image of her who had filled the Prior with holy aspirations; now, a shapeless stone. The dim lamp, that, like a star struggling with the thick gloom of the wintry cell, had shed its slender radiance over the brow of the Virgin Thecla, was gone. But around the key stone of the central arches whence a chain had once depended might be traced in ancient characters, half effaced by time——

Sta. THECLA ORA PRO NOBIS.

One outlet only was there from the chapel—that which led by winding steps to the monastery,—one only recess—the Prior's cell. The former faced the altar—the latter yawned like the mouth of a tomb at its back. Altogether it was a dreary place. Dumb were its walls as

when they refused to return murmured orisons of the anchorite. One uniform sad colouring prevailed throughout. The grey granite was grown hoar with age, and had a ghostly look; but the columns were ponderous, and projected heavy shadows. Sorrow and superstition had their tale, and a moral gloom deepened the darkness of the spot. Despair, which had inspired its construction, seemed to brood therein. Hope shunned its inexorable recesses.

Alone, within the dismal sanctuary, with hands outstretched towards the desecrated image of its tutelar saint, knelt Sybil. All was darkness. Neither the heavy vapours that surrounded her, nor the shrine before which she bent, were visible; but, familiar with the dreary spot, she knew that she had placed herself aright. Her touch had satisfied her that she bowed before the altar of stone—that her benighted vision was turned towards the broken image of the saint, though now involved in gloom the most profound.

Gipsy as she was, infidel as she might be supposed, Sybil possessed, notwithstanding, a zeal and fervour in her faith that might have found favour in the eyes of the most orthodox professor of Catholicism; and if her fiery Spanish blood, flowing too swiftly in her veins, sometimes impelled her to actions, inconsistent it might be with the principles of that faith, the blame of them rested not so much with her want of proper religious bias, as with her sanguine and uncontrollable temperament. Any aberrations of this sort were succeeded by fits of severe repentance; and upon those occasions would she resort alone to St. Cyprian's cell, pouring forth at its altar her penitential prayers. Her sins indeed were light and venial; and she speedily left the shrine with a heart lightened of its load. The most grievous offence she had committed was her betrothment to Luke. Offence we say, because her mother, with her dying lips, had interdicted it. And yet she had dared to act in opposition to the last injunctions of her parent. At this very altar was

she plighted to him. Much as she loved him, she shuddered as her hand was clasped in his—she faltered as she pronounced the binding oath—an ill-omen she deemed it then, that she thought of her dying mother, whose figure seemed to arise between her and her lover. But those thoughts were speedily banished. Often, afterwards, at that altar, had she implored her mother's forgiveness, and she trusted that she had obtained it. Now she saw the vanity of that hope—the realization of that dark foreboding. As she knelt before the altar, the voice of prayer was stifled.

In her agony she cried out, and the sullen walls returned her wail with a response hollow as the mockery of a fiend. Sorrow for uncommitted sin availeth nothing. With conceptions hideous as those which pressed upon her soul—with premeditated guilt clogging her heart, and choking her utterance, she could not pray, and she resigned herself, conscience-stricken and self-abased. Remorse shrieked in her ears, "away" —despair, with scorpion lash, impelled her onwards—she could neither advance nor retreat.

Then in that dark hour did a phantasm, such as is said to haunt the couches of the dying, and to predict immediate dissolution, appear before her. And who shall say in what enchanting colours the retrospect may not then array itself, contrasted, as it must be, with the near approach of death, and the utter darkness in which he cometh enveloped? Clear and distinct as the reality, did the events of her past existence retrace themselves before Sybil's mental vision; and, without losing the sense of her present misery, she endured the agonizing consciousness of past happiness fled for ever. Her eyes filled with tears, she could see no longer — her very brain was blinded. No more visions of past blissfulness, turning her present woe to more intense wretchedness, distracted her—all was blank despair; but even despair has its limits, and beyond them yawneth the wide gulph of madness. Sybil's senses reeled —she laughed in her agony—she tottered towards the brink of this terrible precipice—she was upon the very verge of actual insanity, when, by almost super-human effort, she saved herself.

"Mother of mercy," cried she, "whither was I going? What crouching fiend was that about to seize me? What pit was that which opened beneath me, to engulph me in its depth for ever? But I am rescued. A saving arm hath been stretched out towards me—a ray of comfort shines out from above—I can pray now—my hardness of heart hath passed away—I can weep as heretofore, and my heart will feel refreshed."

And with clasped hands, and streaming eyes, in low and mournful tones, she addressed herself in the following hymn to the tutelar saint of the spot:—

HYMN TO ST. THECLA.

In my trouble, in my anguish,
In the depths of my despair,
As in grief and pain I languish,
Unto thee I raise my prayer.
Sainted Virgin! martyr'd maiden!
Let thy countenance incline
Upon one with woes o'erladen,
Kneeling lowly at thy shrine;
That in agony, in terror,
In her blind perplexity,
Wandering weak in doubt and error,
Calleth feebly upon thee.

Sinful thoughts, sweet Saint, oppress me,
Thoughts that will not be dismissed;
Temptations dark possess me,
Which my strength may not resist.
I am full of pain, and weary
Of my life, I fain would die;
Unto me the world is dreary;
To the grave for rest I fly.
For rest! oh, could I borrow
Thy bright wings, celestial Dove!
They should waft me from my sorrow,
Where peace dwells in bowers above.
Upon one with woes o'erladen,
Kneeling lowly at thy shrine;
Sainted Virgin! martyr'd maiden!
Let thy countenance incline.
Mei miserere, Virgo,
Requiem æternam dona!

By thy loveliness—thy purity,
Unpolluted—undefiled,
That in serene security,
Upon earth's temptations smiled;—
By the fetters that constrained thee,
By thy flame-attested faith;
By the fervour that sustained thee,
By thine angel-ushered death;—
By thy soul's divine elation,
'Mid thine agonies assuring
Of thy sanctified translation,
To beatitude enduring;—
By the mystic interfusion
Of thy spirit with the rays
That in ever-bright profusion
Round the throne eternal blaze;—

By thy portion now partaken,
With the pain-perfected Just;
Look on one of hope forsaken,
From the gates of mercy thrust;
Upon one with woes o'erladen,
Kneeling lowly at thy shrine,
Sainted Virgin! martyr'd maiden,
Let thy countenance incline.
Ora pro me mortis horâ
Sancta Virgo oro te!
Kyrie Eleison!

The sweet, sad voice of the singer died faintly away. The sharpness of her sorrow was assuaged. Seldom, indeed, is it that fervent supplication fails to call down solace to the afflicted. Sybil became more composed. She still, however, trembled at the thoughts of what remained for her to do.

"They will be here ere my prayer be finished," murmured she; "ere the end be accomplished for which I came hither alone. Let me, oh let me make my peace with my Creator, ere I surrender my being to his hands, and then let them deal with me as they will." And she bowed her head in lowly prayer.

Again raising her hands, and casting her eyes

upwards towards the black ceiling, she implored, in song, the intercession of the saintly man, who had bequeathed his name to the cell.

HYMN TO ST. CYPRIAN.

Hear, oh hear me, sufferer holy,
Who didst make thine habitation
'Mid these rocks, devoting wholly
Life to one long expiation
Of thy guiltiness, and solely
By severe mortification
Didst deliver thee. Oh, hear me,
In my dying moments cheer me.
By thy penance—self-denial—
Aid me in the hour of trial.

May, through thee, my prayers prevailing
On the majesty of heaven,
O'er the hosts of hell assailing
My soul, in this dark hour be driven;
So my spirit, when exhaling,
May of sinfulness be shriven;
And his gift unto the giver,
May be rendered pure as ever.
By thy own dark—dread possession,
Aid me with thine intercession.

Scarcely had she concluded this hymn, when whispered accents and stealthy footsteps caught her ear. She arose at once, challenging the intruders in a firm tone.

"Who approaches?" asked she.

"A friend," replied the voice of Handassah.

"You are not alone," returned Sybil.

"'Tis I," replied the peculiarly-conceited tones of Jerry Juniper; "*your* friend, madam, if you will allow me to call myself such. I have ventured into this dungeon-looking place at Handassah's special request; and now I am here, I beg to say that, if I can be of the slightest use, you have only to command me. Infernally dark, to be sure. What the devil?" added he, stumbling forwards, "a stone pillar, eh? s'death, I've nearly cracked my head against it. Give me your hand, Handassah, you know the way about this cursed place." And Jerry groaned dismally from the effects of the concussion.

"It serves you right," said the relentless Handassah; "I hope it will do you good."

Jerry answered not; but would, in all probability, had the darkness permitted, have given her a *look*, such as Byron says he bestowed when a similar benison was passed upon his

broken tooth. "Do me good!" Jerry mentally ejaculated; "may the devil fly away with you, if that's all the sympathy my broken pate is likely to meet with. My own opinion is, that the sex was only created to be a perpetual plague to the better species. The sooner I clear myself of my present incumbrance the better."

"Follow me," said Handassah.

"Whither?" demanded Jerry, sulkily; "I can't possibly tell where to follow, unless you lead the way."

"I am just before you," returned she; "step on boldly."

Jerry obeyed. He marched angrily forwards; but while essaying to grasp the hand of his mistress, which he fondly imagined was stretched out, to guide him upon his way, his shins encountered the sharp edges of what appeared to be a huge box, laid upon the floor, and, his equilibrium being thus destroyed, he was pitched forward, his head coming once more into contact with a hard stone pillar.

Smothered laughter from Handassah explained to Jerry, if he wanted explanation, the trick which his treacherous mistress had played him.

"How troublesome," cried she, in a tone of mock commiseration, "in people to leave their lumber here! I'm afraid your shins must have suffered severely, Jerry. Your head, too, I fear, has not altogether escaped; luckily, it's none of the softest. But I'm sincerely sorry, I assure you, for your accident; besides, a blow on the shins is *so* painful."

"Accident!" echoed Jerry, springing to his feet, "do you call that an accident? I'm lamed, I fear, for life, and that's the greatest misfortune that could happen to a man of my figure and dexterity. Accident! To the devil with you, whimpering hussy; it's an accident, with a spice of design in it; it's odds, but I'll be even with you before long. For my own part, I can't tell what this big lumbering chest is doing here at all, except it be to occasion accidents. Let me feel whether it's open—here —take care of your own shins, my darling."

Saying which, he pushed the chest, angrily, in the direction where he thought Handassah stood. Jerry missed his mark; but the box being struck forcibly against the stone altar, upset its contents upon the floor.

"What have you done?" asked Handassah, in alarm. "What does that box contain?"

"How the devil should I know!" replied Jerry; "you, who placed it there, ought to be acquainted with its contents."

"*I* placed it there!" retorted Handassah, "I never saw it in the course of my life; and what can you be thinking about, to suppose I could carry such a box as that—but do feel what it contains. I'm sure I heard a groan."

"Not I," returned Juniper; "no more tricks upon travellers, if you please—Hark! I hear their voices in the court—they come."

"They come!" echoed Sybil, aroused from her abstraction. "Is the hour then arrived?"

"See, the torchlight gleams down the staircase," cried Handassah; "they are here."

"Not a moment is to be lost," exclaimed Sybil,

addressing Juniper. "Here is a jewel; be it thy portion with Handassah. Wed her, and oh! be happy."

Jerry hemmed slightly, but he took the jewel.

"You hear the conditions?" said Handassah.

"I do," replied he.

"What am I to do for *you?*" asked he, of Sybil. "Command me as you think proper. My life is at your disposal."

Sybil whispered in his ear.

"It shall be done," replied he; "I will not fail you."

"Remain within yon cell until the appointed moment," said Sybil; "give me your hand—I will guide you thither."

Jerry extended his hand.

Scarcely was he concealed, when the torch of the Knight of Malta in part dissipated the gloom that hung around the chapel.

CHAPTER XI.

Cari.—I will not die, I must not—I am contracted
To a young gentleman.
Executioner.—Here's your wedding ring.
DUCHESS OF MALFY.

SLOWLY did the train descend; solemnly and in silence, as if the rites at which they were about to assist had been those of funereal, and not of nuptial, solemnization. Indeed, to look upon those wild and fierce faces, by the ruddily-flashing torchlight, which lent to each a stern and savage expression — to look at those scowling visages, surrounding a bride, from whose pallid cheeks every vestige of colour, and almost of animation, had fled; and a bridegroom, with countenance yet more haggard, and demeanour yet more distracted, the beholder must have imagined that the spectacle was some horrible cere-

monial, practised by dæmons rather than human beings. The arched vault, the pillars, the torchlight, and the wild figures, formed a picture worthy of Callot, or Salvator.

"Is Sybil within the chapel?" asked Barbara.

"I am here," returned a deep voice from the altar. It was so uttered, that Barbara scarcely recognized in its tones those of her grandchild.

"Why do we tarry?" said the Gipsy Queen, "we are all assembled. To the altar."

"To the altar?" shrieked Eleanor. "Oh! no—no——"

"Remember my threat, and obey," muttered Barbara; "thou art in my power now."

A convulsive sob was all the answer Eleanor could make.

"Our number is not complete," said the Priest, who had looked in vain for the Sexton; "Peter Bradley is not with us."

"Ha!" exclaimed Barbara. "Let him be sought for instantly."

"Their search need not extend beyond this spot," said Peter, stepping forward.

The Knight of Malta advanced towards the altar. The torchlight reddened upon the huge stone pillars. It fell upon the shrine, and upon the ghastly countenance of Sybil, who stood beside. Suddenly, as the light approached her, an object hitherto hidden from view was revealed. Sybil uttered a prolonged and fearful shriek; the Knight recoiled likewise in horror; and a simultaneous cry of astonishment burst from the lips of the foremost of the group. All crowded forwards, and universal consternation prevailed amongst the assemblage. Each one gazed at his neighbour, anxious to learn the occasion of this tumult, and vague fears were communicated to those behind, from the terrified glances, which were the only answers returned by their comrades in front.

"Who has dared to bring that body here?" demanded Barbara, in a tone in which anger struggled with apprehension, pointing at the same time to the ghastly corse of a female, with streaming hair, at the altar's feet. "Who has dared to do this, I say? My curse light on

him, whosoever he be. Quick! remove it, I say. What do you stare at? Cravens! is this the first time you have looked upon a corse—that you shrink aghast—that you tremble before it? It is a clod—ay, less than a clod. Away with it—away, I say——"

"Touch it not," cried Luke, lifting a cloud of black hair from off the features;—"It is my mother."

"My daughter!" exclaimed the Sexton.

"What!" vociferated Barbara—"Is that thy daughter—is that Lady Rookwood?—Are the dead arisen to do honour to these nuptials? Speak; thou canst perchance explain how she came hither."

"I know not," returned Peter, glancing fiercely at Barbara: "I may, anon, demand that question of thee. How came this body here?"

"Ask of Richard Checkley," said Barbara, turning to the Priest. "He can perchance inform thee. Priest," added she, in a low voice, "this is thy handiwork."

Checkley replied not.

"Will none remove the body?" ejaculated Barbara. "Once more I ask you, do you fear the dead?"

A murmur arose. Balthazar alone ventured to approach the corse.

Luke started to his feet as he advanced, his eyes glaring with tiger fury.

"Back, old man," cried he, "and dare not, any of you, lay a sacrilegious finger on her corse, or I will stretch him that advanceth, as lowly as lies my mother's head. When, or how, it came hither, matters not. Here, at the altar, hath it been placed, and none shall move it hence. The dead shall witness my nuptials. Fate hath ordained it—*my* fate—o'er which the dead preside! Her ring shall link me to my bride. I knew not, when I snatched it from her death-cold finger, to what end I preserved it. I learn it now. It is here; and he held forth a ring.

"'Tis a fatal boon, that twice-used ring," cried Sybil; "such a ring my mother, on her

death-bed, said should be mine own — such a ring she said should wed me——"

"Unto whom?" fiercely demanded Luke.

"UNTO DEATH," she solemnly rejoined.

Luke's countenance fell. He turned aside, deeply abashed, unable further to brook her gaze; while in accents of such wildly touching pathos as sank into the hearts of each who heard her— hearts, few of them framed of lightly penetrable stuff — the despairing maiden burst into the following strain:—

THE TWICE-USED RING.

"BEWARE thy bridal day,"
On her death-bed, sighed my mother;
"Beware—beware, I say,
Death shall wed thee, and no other.
Cold the hand shall grasp thee,
Cold the arms shall clasp thee,
Colder lips thy kiss shall smother—
Beware thy bridal kiss.

"Thy wedding ring shall be
From a clay-cold finger taken;
From one that, like to thee,
Was by her love forsaken.

For a twice-used ring
Is a fatal thing;
Her griefs who wore it are partaken—
Beware that fatal ring.

"The altar and the grave,
Many steps are not asunder;
Bright banners o'er thee wave,
Shrouded horror lieth under.
Blithe may sound the bell,
Yet 'twill toll thy knell;
Scathed thy chaplet by the thunder—
Beware that blighted wreath."

Beware my bridal day!
Dying lips my doom have spoken;
Deep tones call me away;
From the grave is sent a token.
Cold—cold fingers bring
That ill-omen'd ring,
Soon will a *second* heart be broken;
This is my bridal day.

There was a deep, profound silence, as the last melancholy cadence of the song died away, and many a rugged heart was melted, even to tears. What a vacancy is left in the bosom, when sweet sounds, which have held it in their thrall, fade, and are heard no more! For a moment all was hushed—all eyes were directed towards Sybil. During her song there

had been something in her rapt looks which communicated to them that pathetic and sublime expression, often conferred by the painter upon the features of the Sainted Cecilia. More of pain perhaps might dwell in the countenance of Sybil than would be proper to the lineaments of the divine lyrist; but there was, combined even with the anguish, an ecstatic elevation of soul, which lent to her dark dilated eyes, turned heavenwards, and fraught with unutterable passion, no inapt resemblance of the Virgin Martyr, about to immolate herself at the shrine of pure and holy affection. Eleanor remained in a state of passive stupefaction, vacantly gazing at Sybil, upon whom alone her eyes were fixed, and appearing but indistinctly to apprehend the meaning of her song.

"This is my bridal day," murmured she, in a low tone, when Sybil had finished. "Said not that sweet voice so? I know 'tis my bridal day. I am to wed him. Yet he was buried yesternight. I know it, I saw him in his coffin, cold and dead. My love—my Ranulph—and would you wed me

to him there—well, as you like—better a dead bridegroom than none at all—better, ah! better than wed me to another—what a chapel you have chosen, mother! A tomb—a sepulchre—but 'tis meet for such nuptials as mine—and what wedding guests!—Was that pale woman, in her shroud-like dress, invited here by you? Tell me that, mother."

"My God, her senses are gone!" cried Mrs. Mowbray. "Why did I venture into this horrible place?"

"Ask not *why*, now, Madam," rejoined the Priest. "The hour for consideration is past—we must act. Let the marriage proceed, at all hazards; we will then take means to extricate ourselves from this accursed place."

"Spoken aright, father," said the Sexton, who was near them; "the time for action is arrived. Proceed with the marriage. You shall depart in safety; of that I pledge myself."

"Remove that horrible object," said Mrs. Mowbray, "it fascinates the vision of my child."

"Lend me thine hand, father," said Peter, staring fixedly at the Priest.

"No, no," replied the Priest, shuddering. "I will not—cannot touch it—do thou alone remove it."

Peter approached Luke. The latter now offered no further opposition, and the body was taken away. The eyes of Eleanor followed it into the dark recesses of the vault; and when she could no longer distinguish the white flutter of the sere-cloths, her labouring bosom seemed torn asunder with the profound sigh that burst from it, and her head declined upon her shoulder.

"Give me to see that ring," said the Priest, addressing Luke, who still held the wedding ring between his fingers.

"I am not naturally superstitious," said Mrs. Mowbray; "whether my mind be affected with the horrors of this place, I know not; but I have dread of that ring. She shall not wear it."

"Where no other can be found," said the Priest, with a significant and peculiar look at Mrs.

Mowbray, "I see no reason why this should be objected to. I should not have suspected you, Madam, of such weakness—but grant there were evil spell, or charm, attached to it, which, trust me, there is not—as how should there be, to a harmless piece of gold? my benediction, and aspersion with holy lymph, hath sufficient power to exorcise and expel it. To remove your fears, it shall be done at once."

A cup containing water was brought him, together with a plate of salt, which condiment the Devil is said to abhor, and which is held to be a symbol of immortality and of eternity; in that, being itself incorruptible, it preserves all else from corruption. And with the customary formula of prayer and exorcism, the Priest thrice mingled the crystal particles with the pure fluid; after which, taking the ring in his hand, with much solemnity, he besprinkled it with a few drops of the water which he had blessed; made the sign of the cross upon the golden circlet; uttered another and more potent exorcism, to eradicate and expel every device of Sathan, and delivered it back to Luke.

"She may wear it now in safety," said the Sexton with strong contempt. "Were the snake himself coiled round that consecrated bauble, thy prayers would unclasp his lithest folds. But wherefore do we tarry now? Naught lies between us and the altar—the path is clear. The bridegroom grows impatient."

"And the bride?" asked Barbara.

"Is ready," replied the Priest. "Madam, delay not longer. Daughter, your hand."

Eleanor gave her hand. It was clammy and cold. Supported by her mother, she moved slowly towards the altar, which was but a few steps from where they stood. She offered no resistance, but did not raise her head. Luke was by her side. Then for the first time did the enormity of the barbarous, dishonourable act he was about to commit, strike him with its full force. He saw it in its darkest colours. It was one of those terrible moments when the headlong wheel of passion stands suddenly still.

"There is yet time," groaned he. "Oh let me not damn myself perpetually—let me save her—save Sybil—save myself."

They were at the altar—that wild wedding train. High over head the torch was raised. The red light flashed on bridegroom and on bride, giving to the pale features of each an almost livid look — it fell upon the gaunt aspect of the Sexton, and lit up the smile of triumphant malice that played upon his face— it fell upon the fantastical habiliments of Barbara, and upon the haughty but perturbed physiognomy of Mrs. Mowbray—it fell upon the salient points of the Gothic arches — upon one moulded pillar—upon the marble image of the Virgin Thecla — and on the scarcely less marble countenance of Sybil, who stood behind the altar, silent, statue-like, immovable. The effect of light and shade on other parts of the scene, upon the wild drapery, and harsh lineaments of many of the group, was also eminently striking.

Just as the Priest was about to commence the marriage service, a yelling chorus, which the gipsies were accustomed to sing at the celebration of the nuptials of one of their own tribe,

burst forth. Nothing could be more horribly discordant than their song.

WEDDING CHORUS OF GIPSIES.

Scrape the cat-gut—pass the liquor,
Let your quick feet move the quicker.
Ta-ra-la.

Dance and sing in jolly chorus,
Bride and bridegroom are before us,
And the Patrico stands o'er us.
Ta-ra-la.

To unite their hands he's ready;
For a moment, palls, be steady;
Cease your quaffing,
Dancing, laughing;
Leave off riot,
And be quiet,
While 'tis doing.
'Tis begun!
All is over!
Two are ONE!
The Patrico has link'd 'em,
Daddy Hymen's torch has blink'd 'em.
Amen!
To't again.
Now for quaffing,
Now for laughing,
Stocking-throwing,
Liquor flowing;
For our bridals are no bridles, and our altars never alter
From the flaggon never flinch we, in the jig we never falter.

No! that's not *our* way, for *we*
Are staunch lads of Romany.
For our wedding, hurrah!
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

This uncouth chorus ended, the marriage proceeded. Sybil had disappeared. Had she fled? —No! she was by the bride. Mechanically did Eleanor take her place. A faint voice syllabled the responses. You could scarce have seen her lips move; but the answers were given, and the Priest was satisfied.

He took the ring; he sprinkled it once again with the holy water, in the form of the cross. He pronounced the prayer. "*Benedic, Domine, annulum hunc, quem nos in tuo nomine benedicimus, ut quæ eum gestaverit, fidelitatem integram suo sponso tenens, in pace et voluntate tuâ permaneat atque in mutuâ charitate semper vivat.*"

He was about to return the ring to Luke, when the torch, held by the Knight of Malta, was dashed to the ground by some unseen hand, and instantly extinguished. The wild pageant

vanished, as suddenly as the figures disappear when the magic glass is removed. A wild hubbub succeeded. Hoarsely above all the clamour arose the voice of Barbara.

"To the door, quickly—to the door—let no one pass. We will find out the author of this mishap, anon. Away."

She was obeyed. Several of the crew stationed themselves at the door.

"Proceed now with the ceremony," continued Barbara. "By darkness or by light, the match shall be completed."

"Right," cried the Sexton. "Proceed—proceed."

The ceremonial proceeded. The ring was placed upon the finger of the bride; and as Luke touched it, he shuddered. Cold was it as that of the corpse which he had clasped but now. The prayer is said—the blessing given—it is complete.

Suddenly then, there issued from the darkness, deep dirge-like tones, and a voice solemnly chaunted, what all knew to be a death-song of

their race, always hymned by wailing women over an expiring sister. The music seemed to float in the air. Thus ran the rhymes, which we shall entitle

THE SOUL BELL.

Fast the sand of life is failing,
Fast her latest sigh exhaling—
Fast, fast, is she dying.

With death's chills her limbs are shivering,
With death's gasp the lips are quivering—
Fast her soul away is flying.

O'er the mountain-top it fleeteth,
And the skiey wonders greeteth,
Singing loud, as stars it meeteth,
On its way.

Hark! the sullen Soul-bell tolling,
Hollowly in echoes rolling,
Seems to say—

She will ope her eyes—oh never!
Quenched their dark light—gone for ever!
She is dead.

Meanwhile the marriage group lingered near the altar, awaiting, it would seem, permission from the Gipsy Queen to quit the cell. Luke

stirred not. Clasped in his own, the cold hand of his bride detained him; and when he would have moved, her tightened grasp prevented his departure.

Mrs. Mowbray's patience was exhausted by the delay. She was not altogether free from apprehension. "Why do we linger here?" she whispered to the Priest. "Do thou, father, lead the way."

"The crowd is dense," replied Checkley. "They resist my effort."

"Resist!" cried Mrs. Mowbray, in alarm, "are we prisoners here?"

"Let me make the attempt," cried Luke, with fiery impatience. "I will force a passage out."

"Quit not thy bride," whispered Peter, "as thou valuest her safety. Heed not aught else. She alone is in danger. Suffer her not to be withdrawn from thy hand, if thou wouldst not lose her. Remain here. I will bring the matter to a speedy issue."

"Enough," replied Luke; I stir not hence, and he drew his bride closer towards him. He

stooped to imprint a kiss upon her lips. A cold shudder ran through her frame as he touched them, but she resisted not his embrace.

Peter's attempt to effect an egress, was as unsuccessful as that of the Priest. Presenting Excalibur at his bosom, the Knight of Malta challenged him to stand.

"You cannot pass," exclaimed the Knight, "our orders are peremptory."

"What am I to understand by this?" said Peter, angrily. "Why are we detained?"

"You will learn all anon," returned Barbara; "in the mean time you are my prisoners;—or, if you like not the phrase, my wedding guests."

"The wedding is complete," repeated the Sexton; "the bride and bridegroom are impatient to depart, and we, the guests, albeit some of us may be no foes to darkness, desire not to hold our nuptial revels here."

"But Sybil's wedding hath not taken place," said Barbara; "you must tarry for that."

"Ha! now it comes," thought Peter. "And

who, may I ask," said he aloud, "amongst this goodly company, is to be her bridegroom?"

"The best amongst them," returned Barbara; "Sir Luke Rookwood. Art thou answered now?"

"No," replied Peter, "he hath a bride already."

"She may be *removed*," said Barbara, with bitter and peculiar emphasis. "Dost understand my meaning now?"

"I will not understand it," said Peter. "Thou canst not mean to destroy her who now stands at the altar?"

"She who now stands at the altar must make way for a successor—she who grasps the bridegroom's hand, shall die."

"Recall that oath," exclaimed a voice from the altar.

"I may not. 'Tis irrevocable. She must die."

"And think you, you will be allowed to execute your murderous intention with impunity?" shrieked Mrs. Mowbray, in an agony of terror. "Think you that I will stand by,

and see my child slaughtered before my face—that my friends will suffer it? Think you that even your own tribe will dare to execute your horrible purpose? They will not. They will side with us. Even now they murmur. What can you hope to gain by an act so wild and dreadful? What object can you have?"

"The same as your own," reiterated Barbara!—"the advancement of my child. Sybil is as dear to me, as Eleanor is to you. She is my child's child—the daughter of my best beloved daughter. I have sworn to marry her to Sir Luke Rookwood. The means are in my power. I will keep my vow. I will wed her to him. You did not hesitate to tear your daughter from the man she loved, to give her to the man she hated; and for what? For gold—for power—for rank. I have the same motive. I love my child, and she loves Sir Luke, has loved him long, and truly; therefore shall she have him. What to me is *thy* child, or *thy* feelings, except they are subservient to my wishes? She stands in my way—I remove her."

"Who placed her in thy path?" asked the

Sexton. "Didst thou not lend a helping hand, to create that obstacle thyself?"

"I did," replied Barbara. "Wouldst thou know wherefore? I will tell thee. I had a double motive for it. There is a curse upon the house of Rookwood, that killeth the first fair bride each generation leadeth to the altar. Hast thou never heard of that?"

"I have! And did that idle legend sway thee?"

"And dost thou call it idle! *Thou!*—well—I had another motive—a prophecy."

"By thyself uttered," replied Peter.

"Even so," replied Barbara. "The prophecy is fulfilled. The stray rook is found. The rook hath with rook mated. Luke hath wedded Eleanor. He will hold possession of his lands. The prophecy is fulfilled."

"But *how?*" asked Peter, "will thy art tell thee how and why she shall now hold possession? Canst tell me that?"

"My art goeth not so far. I know the why and wherefore he will now hold them. I have

predicted the event. It hath come to pass. I am satisfied. He hath wedded her. Be it mine to free him from that yoke." And Barbara laughed exultingly.

The Sexton approached the old crone, and looked her steadfastly in the face.

"Hear *me*," said he; "and I will tell thee that with which thy juggling art refuseth to acquaint thee. Eleanor Mowbray is heir to the lands of Rookwood—the estates are her's—they were bequeathed to her by her grandsire, Sir Reginald."

"She was unborn when he died," cried Mrs. Mowbray.

"True," replied Peter; "but the lands were left to thy issue *female*, should such issue be born to thee."

"And did Sir Piers, my brother, know of this? did he see this will?" asked Mrs. Mowbray, with trembling impatience.

"He did—but he withheld the knowledge of it from thee and thine."

"My curses on his memory. Why knew I

not this before? Why didst thou not tell me, ere this was done which cannot be undone? I have sacrificed my child."

"Because it did not chime with my purposes to tell thee," returned Peter, coldly.

"Thou hast, indeed," replied Barbara. "Thou hast lost all. But it works well for me."

A deep groan burst from the bosom of the bride. Luke had heard all. He had with difficulty controuled his rising choler. He did, however, controul it; but not without a terrible effort.

"It is false—it is false," cried Mrs. Mowbray; her anger and vexation getting the better of her fears. "I will not believe it. Who art thou, that pretendest to know the secrets of our house?"

"Wouldst thou know who I am?" replied the Sexton, in a hollow voice. "I am Alan Rookwood!"

"Alan Rookwood!" echoed Mrs. Mowbray.

"Ay, Alan Rookwood—the sworn enemy of

thy father—of thee—of all ye: your fate—your destiny—your curse. I am that Alan Rookwood, whose name thou breathedst in the vault. I am he, the avenger—the avenged. I saw thy father die. I heard his groans—*his groans!*—ha, ha. I saw his sons die;—one fell in battle,—I was with him there—the other expired in his bed. I was hidden in Sir Piers's room when he breathed his last, and listened to his death agonies. 'Twas I who counselled him to keep the lands from thee, and from thy child, and he withheld them. One only amongst the race whose name I have cast off have I loved; and him—because," added he, with something like emotion—"because he was my daughter's child—Luke Rookwood—and even he shall minister to my vengeance. He will be thy curse—thy daughter's curse—for he loves her not. Yet he is her husband, and hath her lands;—ha, ha!" And he laughed till he became convulsed with the paroxysm of laughter.

"Mine ears are stunned," cried Mrs. Mowbray.

"The bride is mine, relinquish her to me," cried Barbara. "Advance and seize her, my children."

Alan Rookwood (as we shall now denominate the Sexton) suddenly grew calm: he raised the whistle to his lips, and blew a call so loud and shrill, that those who were advancing hung back, irresolute.

There was a rush at the door of the vault. The sentinels were struck down; and, with pistols in each hand, and followed by two assistants, Dick Turpin sprang into the thick of the crew.

"Here we are," cried he, "ready for action. Where is Sir Luke Rookwood? where my church-yard pal, Peter?"

"Here," cried the Sexton and Luke simultaneously.

"Then stand aside," cried Dick, pushing in the direction of the sounds, and bearing down all opposition. "Have a care there—these triggers are ticklish. Friend or foe, who touches me, shall have a bullet in his gizzard.

Here I am, pal Peter; and here are my two chums, Rust and Wilder. Cut the whid."

"Have we license to pass scatheless now?" asked the Sexton; "or shall we make good our way?"

"You shall not pass," cried Barbara, furiously. "Think you to rob me of my prey? Upon them—seize her. What, cowards! Do you hesitate? Ha!"

"Kindle the torches," cried several voices. "We fight not in the dark."

A pistol was flashed. The torch again blazed. Its light fell upon a tumultuous group.

"Seize the bride," cried Barbara.

"Hold!" exclaimed a voice from the altar.

It was Sybil.

Her hand was clasped in that of Luke. Eleanor had fainted in the arms of Jerry Juniper.

"Art thou my bride?" ejaculated Luke.

"Behold the ring upon my finger!—Thy own hand placed it there."

"Betrayed!" screamed Alan, in a voice of anguish. "My schemes annihilated—myself undone—my enemies triumphant—lost—lost. All is destroyed—all."

"Joy—joy," exclaimed Mrs. Mowbray; "my child is saved."

"And *mine* destroyed," groaned Barbara. "I have sworn to slay the bride—and Sybil is that bride."

CHAPTER XII.

> The wolf shall find her grave, and scrape it up;
> Not to devour the corse, but to discover
> The horrid murther.
>
> WEBSTER.

"BRAVO! capital!" cried Turpin, laughing loud and long as an Olympian Deity; "has this simple wench outwitted you all—turned the tables upon the whole gang of plotters—eh?—excellent!—ha, ha, ha! the next time you get married, Sir Luke, let me advise you not to choose a wife in the dark—a man should have all his senses about him on these occasions. Make love when the liquor's in, but marry when it's out, and above all, with your eyes open—this beats every thing—ha, ha, ha!—you must excuse me, but, upon my soul I can't help it—" and his laughter seemed inextinguishable.

"Take your men without," whispered Alan Rookwood, "keep watch as before—and let the discharge of a pistol bespeak the approach of danger, as agreed upon—much yet remains to be done here."

"How so?" asked Dick; "it seems to me the job's entirely settled—if not to *your* satisfaction. I'm always ready to oblige my friend Sir Luke, but curse me, if I'll lend my help to any underhand work—steer clear of foul play, or Dick Turpin holds no hand with you—as to that poor wench, if you mean her any harm d—— me if I will——"

"No harm is intended her," replied Alan. "I applaud your magnanimity," added he, sarcastically—"such sentiments are, it must be owned, in excellent keeping with your conduct."

"In keeping or not," replied Turpin, gravely, "cold-blooded murder is altogether out of my line, and I wash my hands of it—a shot or two in self-defence is another matter—and when——"

"A truce to this," interrupted Alan; "the girl is safe—will you mount guard again?"

"If that be the case, certainly," replied Dick, "I shall be glad to get back to Bess—I couldn't bring her with me into this black hole. A couple of shots will tell you 'tis Ranulph Rookwood—but mind—no harm to the gipsy girl—to Lday Rookwood I should say—she's a jewel, take my word for it, which Sir Luke must be mad to throw away." And calling his men, he departed.

Alan Rookwood bent his steps towards the Gipsy Queen. Dark thoughts gathered thickly o'er his brow. He smiled as he drew nigh to Barbara—a smile it was

"That wrinkled up his skin, even to the hair."

Barbara looked at him at first with distrust, but as he developed his secret purposes, that smile became reflected upon her own features. Two fiends they seemed—grinning and gloating over human misery—their conference took place apart. We willingly leave them, to return to the altar.

Mrs. Mowbray and the Priest were still there. Both were occupied in ineffectual endeavours to restore Eleanor to consciousness. She recovered

from her swoon, but it was evident her senses still wandered, and vainly did Mrs. Mowbray lavish her tenderest caresses upon her child. Eleanor returned them not.

Luke meanwhile had given vent to the wildest fury. He shook away Sybil's grasp—he dashed her from him—he regarded her with withering glances—he loaded her with reproaches. She bore his violence with meekest submission—she looked imploringly—but she replied not to his taunts—again she clung to the hem of his garment when cast aside. Can the heart of man resist such love in woman? hath it no compunction—no pity? Luke appeared unmoved; what passed within, we pause not to examine. He grew calmer—his calmness was more terrible to Sybil than his previous wrath had been.

"You are my wife," said he; "what then?—by fraud, by stratagem, you have obtained that title, and perforce must keep it—but the title *only* shall you retain. No rights of wife shall ever be your's. It will be in your power to call

yourself Lady Rookwood—you will be so in name—in nothing else."

"I shall not bear it long," murmured Sybil.

Luke laughed scornfully. "So you said before," replied he; "and yet I see not wherefore you are likely to abandon it. The event will show. Thus far you have deceived me, and I place no further faith in your assertions. My hand was your's—you refused it—when I would give it to another, clandestinely you grasp it. And am I then to believe what now you say? The wind will change—the vane veer with it.

"It will not veer from you," she meekly answered.

"Why did you step between me and my bride?"

"To save her life; to lay down mine for her's."

"An idle subterfuge. Well do you know you run no risk of being called upon to do so. Your life is in no danger. The *sacrifice* was unnecessary. I could have dispensed with *your* assistance:—my own would have sufficed to protect Eleanor."

"Your single arm would not have prevailed against numbers:—they would have killed you likewise."

"Tush!" said Luke fiercely. "Not only have you snatched from me my bride—you have robbed me of my fair estates—my house—my all—save of my barren title—and that, even *that*, you have tarnished."

"True—true," sighed Sybil. "I knew not that the lands were her's, else had I never done it."

"False—false," cried Luke;—"false as the rest. *They* will be his—*She* will be his. I shall still be an outcast, while he will riot in my halls—will press her to his bosom. Cling not to me.—Hence—or I will spurn thee from me. I am undone—undone by thee, accursed one."

"Oh curse me not—your words cut deep enough."

"Would they could kill thee," cried Luke, with savage bitterness. "Thou hast placed a bar between me and my prospects, which nothing can now remove—nothing but—ha!—"

and his countenance assumed a deadly hue, and fearful expression. "By heaven, thou almost rousest the fell spirit which is said to dwell within the breast of my devoted race. I feel as if I could kill thee."

"No, no," cried Sybil; "for mercy's sake—for thy own sake, do not stab me. It is not too late—I will repair thy wrong!"

"Ever deceiving—thou wouldst again delude me. Thou canst not repair it. One way alone remains, and that—"

"I will pursue," responded Sybil, sadly but firmly.

"Never," echoed Luke; "thou shalt not. Ha!" exclaimed he, as he found his arms suddenly pinioned behind him. "What new treachery is this? By whose orders am I thus fettered?"

"By mine," said Alan Rookwood, stepping forward.

"By thine!" echoed Luke. "And wherefore? Release me."

"Be patient," replied Alan. "You will hear all anon. In the mean time you must be content

to remain my prisoner. Quit not your hold," added he, addressing the gipsies who kept charge of Luke.

" Their lives shall answer for their obedience," said Barbara.

Upon a further signal from Alan, Eleanor was torn from her mother's arms, and a bandage passed so suddenly over Mrs. Mowbray's face, that before she could raise a cry of alarm, all possibility of utterance was effectually prevented. The Priest alone was left at liberty.

Barbara snatched the hand of Eleanor. She dragged her to Sybil.

" Thou art Lady Rookwood," whispered she; " but she hath thy domains. I give her to thee."

" She is the *only bar* between thy husband and his rights," whispered Alan Rookwood, in a tone of horrible irony, " *It is not too late to repair thy wrong.*"

" Away, tempter!" cried Sybil, horror-stricken. " I know thee well. Yet," continued she, in an altered tone, " I will risk all for him. I have done him wrong. But one mode of

atonement remains; and, horrible though it be, I will embrace it. Let me not pause. Give her to me." And she seized upon the unresisting hand of Eleanor.

"Need'st thou my aid," asked Barbara?

"I need no aid," replied Sybil; "Let none approach us. A clapping of hands will let you know when all is over." And she dragged her passive victim deeper into the vault.

"Sybil—Sybil," cried Luke, struggling with frantic violence to liberate himself. "Hurt her not—I was rash—I was mad—but I am calmer now:—she hears me not—she will not turn. God of heaven, she will murder her—it will be done while I speak. Release her—I must prevent it. I am the cause of all—release me, villains. Would that I had died, ere I had seen this day!"

At a signal from the Sexton, Luke also was blindfolded. He ceased to struggle; but his labouring breast told of the strife within.

"Miscreants!" exclaimed the Priest, who had hitherto witnessed the proceedings in horror.

"Why do not these rocks fall in, and crush you and your iniquities? Save her—oh save her. Have you no pity for the innocent?"

"Such pity have we," replied Barbara, "as thyself did show to Susan Rookwood. She was as innocent as Eleanor Mowbray, and yet thou didst not pity *her*."

"Heaven is my witness," exclaimed the Priest, "that I never injured her."

"Take not heaven's name in vain," cried Barbara. "Who stood by while it was doing?—who—but thou? Whose firmer hand lent aid unto the murderer's trembling efforts? Thine. Whose pressure stifled her thrilling screams, and choked her cries for mercy? Thine—thine: and now thou pratest to me of pity—thou, the slayer of the sleeping and the innocent!"

"What!" cried Alan, with terrific eagerness, "Was not Sir Piers alone guilty of that damned act? Was there an accessory?"

"There was," replied Barbara;—"behold him."

"'Tis false," exclaimed the Priest, in extremity of terror.

"False!" echoed Barbara. "I had Sir Piers's own confession. He told me all. You had designs upon Sir Piers, which his wife opposed—you hated her—you were in the confidence of both—how did you keep that confidence?——He told me *how*, by awakening a spirit of jealousy and pride, that o'ermastered all his better feelings. False!—He told me of your hellish machinations—your jesuitical plots—your schemes—but they failed. He was too weak—too feeble an instrument to serve you—you left him, but not before *she* had left him.—False! ha! I have that shall instantly convict you. The corse is here, within this cell. Who brought it hither? You, or I?"

The Priest was silent: he seemed confounded by the crone's violence of manner.

"You did," continued Barbara. "Your agent, Balthazar, has betrayed you. It was brought hither to prevent the discovery of Sir Luke

Rookwood's legitimacy. You meant to make your own terms about it. It has come hither to proclaim your guilt—to be a fearful witness against you. You have called heaven to witness your innocence—you shall attest it by oath upon that body: and should aught indicate your guilt, I will hang you as I would a dog, and clear off one long score with justice. Do you shrink from this?"

"I shrink not," replied the Priest, in a voice hollow and broken. "Bring me to the body."

"Seize each an arm," said Barbara—addressing Zoroaster and the Knight of Malta, "and lead him to the corse."

"I will administer the oath," said Alan Rookwood, sternly.

"No—not thou," stammered the Priest.

"And wherefore not?" asked Alan. "If you are innocent, you need fear nothing from her."

"I fear nothing from the *dead*," replied Checkley; "lead on."

Sybil was alone with her victim. They were near the mouth of the cell which had been Prior

Cyprian's flinty dormitory, and were almost involved in darkness—one stream of light glancing through the pillars. Eleanor had not spoken. She had suffered herself to be dragged thither without resistance, scarce conscious, it would seem, of her danger. Sybil relinquished her hold: but Eleanor attempted not to fly. The gipsy girl gazed upon her for some minutes with sorrow and surprise. "She comprehends not her perilous situation," murmured Sybil. "She knows not that she stands upon the threshold of the grave. Oh! would that she could pray. Shall I, her murderess? pray for her. My prayers would not be heard. And yet to kill her unshriven, will be a twofold crime. Let me not look on her —my hand trembles—I can scarce grasp the dagger. Let me think on all he has said. I have wronged him—I am his bane—hi curse. I have robbed him of all—there is but one remedy—'tis *this*—Oh, God!—she recovers—I cannot do it now."

It was a terrible moment for Eleanor's revival, when the bright steel flashed before her

eyes. Better, if it were to strike her, that the weapon had found its way upon the instant to her heart, than that time should be given for agonizing reflection. Better she had died at once, than by degrees, in prolonged torture. Terror at once restored her. She cast herself at Sybil's feet.

"Spare—spare me," cried she. "Oh what a dream I have had—and to waken thus, with the dagger's point at my breast—but you will not kill—you, gentle maid, who promised to preserve me. Ah, no, I am sure you will not."

"Appeal no more to me," said Sybil, sternly. "Make your peace with heaven. Your minutes are numbered."

"I cannot pray," said Eleanor, "while you are near me."

"Will you pray if I retire, and leave you? Give me a signal when you are prepared."

"I cannot give the signal. Terrible as you are—much as I fear you, I love you still. Oh! do not leave me, or let me go."

"If you but stir," said Sybil, "I stab you to the heart."

"I will not stir—I will kneel here for ever. Stab me as I kneel—as I pray to you. You cannot kill me while I cling to you thus—while I kiss your hands—while I bedew them with my tears. Those tears will not sully them, not so my blood."

"Speak not of that," cried Sybil shudderingly, endeavouring to withdraw her hand.

"Ah no, I quit you not: your hand trembles—there is hope—there is mercy;—this shaking hand could ne'er shed blood."

"It shall not do so," gasped Sybil.

"Say you so," cried Eleanor, in transport. "You are my benefactress—you have given me life."

"I am your worst of foes," responded Sybil, sadly, yet firmly. "You must partake of this;" and she extended a phial towards her.

"It is poison," shrieked Eleanor.

"It is."

"I will not drink it. I have no choice of death, if die I must. Both ways equally affright me. Choose thou. Tell me not how, or when. Yet a moment—thou lovest, maiden, is't not so?"

"Love!" echoed Sybil. "Few have loved as I love."

"And art beloved?"

"Not so," sighed Sybil.

"Yet think upon thy lover, and spare me, for my Ranulph's sake."

"For my lover's sake I slay thee," returned Sybil. "Thou wilt never wed thy Ranulph! Prepare. Thy sand is run."

"Yet a moment hear me."

"Not a second. Close thine eyes."

"No, I will fix them on thee thus—thou canst not strike then. I will use every art to move thee. Thy nature is not cruel—thy soul is full of pity. It melts—those tears—thou wilt be merciful—thou canst not deliberately kill me."

"I cannot—I cannot," said Sybil. "Take thy life on one condition."

"Name it!"

"That thou weddest Sir Luke Rookwood."

"Ha!" exclaimed Eleanor; "all rushes back upon me at that name, the whole of that fearful scene passes in review before me."

"Do you reject my proposal?"

"I dare not."

"I must have your oath. Swear by your every hope of eternity, that you will wed none other than Sir Luke Rookwood."

"By every hope, I swear it."

"While he liveth?"

"While he liveth."

"Enough. I am satisfied. Tarry with me. Stir not—scream not, whatever you may see or hear. Your life depends upon your firmness. When I am no more ——"

"No more," echoed Eleanor, in horror?"

"Be calm," said Sybil. "When I am dead, clap your hands together. They will come to seek you. They will find me in your stead. Then rush to him—to Sir Luke Rookwood. He will protect thee. Say to him hereafter, that I died for the wrong I did him—that I died, and blessed him."

"Can you not live, and save me?" sobbed Eleanor.

"Ask it not. While I live, your life is in danger. When I am gone, none will seek to

harm you. Fare your well!—Remember your oath. Remember also—ha!—that groan."

Both maidens started, as a deep groan knelled in their ears.

"Whence comes that sound?" cried Sybil. "Hist!—a voice?"

"It is that of the Priest," replied Eleanor.—"Hark! he groans. They have murdered him. Kind heaven receive his soul."

"Pray for me," cried Sybil: "pray fervently—avert your face—down on your knees—down—down."

We must now quit this painful scene for another scarcely less painful, and return to the unfortunate Priest.

The father had been brought before the body of Susan Rookwood. Even in the gloom, the shimmer of the white serecloths, and the pallid features of the corpse, was ghastly enough. The torchlight made them terrible.

"Kneel," said Alan Rookwood. The Priest complied. Alan knelt beside him.

"Knowest thou these features?" asked he.

"Regard them well—fix thine eyes full upon them. Dost thou know them?"

"I do."

"Place thy hand upon her breast. Doth not the flesh creep, and shrink beneath thy touch? doth she not writhe and struggle, as when 'twas done? Art still firm? Now raise thine hand—make the cross of thy faith upon her bosom. By that faith thou swearest thou art innocent."

"I do," returned the Priest; "art thou now satisfied?"

"No," replied Alan. "Let the torch be removed. Thy innocence must be more deeply attested," continued he, as the light was withdrawn. "This proof will not fail. Entwine thy fingers round her throat."

"Her throat?"

"Thou refusest?—Ha!"

"Have I not done enough?"

"Thy hesitation proves thy guilt," exclaimed Barbara.

"That proof is wanting then?" returned the Priest; "my hand is upon her throat—what more?"

"As thou dost hope for mercy in thine hour of need, swear that thou didst never refuse *her* mercy!"

"I swear."

"May the dead convict thee of perjury if thou hast forsworn thyself," said Alan; "thou art free. Take away thy hand."

"Ha! what is this?" exclaimed the Priest. "You have put some jugglery upon me. I cannot withdraw my hand. It sticks to her throat, as though 'twere glued by blood. Tear me away—I have not force enough to liberate myself. Why dost thou grin at me? The corse grins likewise. It is jugglery. I am innocent.—You would take away my life. Tear me away, I say: the veins rise—they blacken—they are filling with new blood, I feel them swell—they coil like living things around my fingers—She is alive."

"And thou art innocent?"

"I am—I am. Let not my ravings convict me. For Jesu's sake release me."

"Blaspheme not, but arise. I hold thee not."

"Thou dost," groaned the Priest. "Thy grasp tightens round my throat;—thy hard and skinny fingers are there—I strangle—help."

"Thy own fears strangle thee. My hand is at my side," returned Alan, calmly.

"Villain, thou liest. Thy grasp is like a vice. The strength of a thousand devils is in thy hand. Will none lend help? I never pressed so hard. She never suffered this torture!—I choke — choke — ha." And the Priest rolled heavily backwards.

There was a groan—a rattle in the throat—and all was still.

"He is dead—strangled," cried several voices, holding down the torch. The face of the Priest was blackened and contorted—the "eye-balls farther out than when he lived." It was a ghastly sight.

A murmur arose amongst the spectators. Barbara deemed it prudent to appease them.

"He was guilty," cried she. "He was the murderer of Susan Rookwood."

"And I, *her father*, have avenged her," said Alan, sternly.

The dreadful silence which followed his speech was broken by the report of a pistol. Its sound, though startling, was felt almost as a relief.

"We are beset," cried Alan. "Some of you fly to reconnoitre."

"To your posts," cried Barbara.

Several of the crew flocked to the entrance.

"Unbind the prisoners," cried Alan.

Mrs. Mowbray and Luke were accordingly set free.

Two almost simultaneous reports of a pistol were now heard.

"'Tis Ranulph Rookwood," shouted Alan; that was the preconcerted signal.

"Ranulph Rookwood," echoed Eleanor, who caught the exclamation; "he comes to save me."

"Remember thy oath," gasped a dying voice. "He is no longer thine."

"I remember," replied Eleanor, tremblingly.

A moment afterwards a faint clapping of hands reached the ears of Barbara.

"All is over," muttered she.

"Ha!" exclaimed Alan Rookwood, with a frightful look,—"Is it done?"

Barbara motioned him towards the farther end of the vault.

CHAPTER XIII.

Grimm.—Look, Captain, here comes one of the blood-hounds of justice.

Schw.—Down with him. Don't let him utter a word.

Moor.—Silence, I will hear him.

The Robbers.—SCHILLER.

GLADLY do we now exchange the dank atmosphere of St. Cyprian's cell, and the gloomy horrors which have detained us there so long, for balmy air and genial sunshine—and the boon companionship of Dick Turpin.

Upon regaining the verdant ruins of the ancient Priory, all appeared pretty much as our Highwayman had left it. Dick wended towards his mare. Black Bess uttered an affectionate whinnying sound as he approached her, and yielded, as he drew near, her sleek neck to his caresses.

No Bedouin ever loved his horse more

tenderly than Turpin. — "'Twill be a hard day when thou and I part!" murmured he, affectionately patting her soft and silky cheeks. Bess thrust her nose into his hand, biting him playfully,—as much as to say—"That day shall never arrive."

Turpin at least understood the appeal. He was skilled in the language of the Huoyhnymns—"I would rather lose my right hand than *that* should happen," sighed Dick;—"but, there's no saying:—the best of friends must part; and thou and I may be one day separated,—thy destination is the knacker—mine, perhaps, the gallows. We are neither of us cut out for old age, that's certain. Curse me if I can tell how it is, but since I've been in that vault, I've got some queer crotchet into my head. I can't help likening thee to that poor gipsy wench, Sybil, but, may I be d——d if I'd use thee as her fancy man Luke has used her."

A hoarse laugh roused Dick from his meditations.

"Silence," thundered Dick to his associates,

"what can you, you sniggering spice-gloaks*, know of a prad like this, or of the feelings of a scampsman. When you get more up in the stirrups, you will grow wiser, and laugh less."

"I dare say we shall," returned Wilder, "for then our time will be nearly *up* too."

"And that won't be no laughing matter," returned Rust, becoming grave.

"Let us be serious now, at any rate," cried Dick. "All the wedge† we got at the crack‡ last night must be chanted§; it must be *fenced*‖ at York to-morrow."

"It shall be done, Captain," replied both robbers.

"And the rag¶ it returns brought to our flash ken on Thorne Waste, and given to Conky Jem, the old lag, that keeps it—I shall have to make myself scarce for a few days."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Wilder.

* Footpads. † Silver.
‡ Housebreaking. § The cipher or crest removed.
‖ Disposed of to a receiver. ¶ Money.

"There's some *pull* at the bottom of the job down stairs, that I'm not fly to—the devil only knows what will be the upshot of the game, when his cater cousin Peter Bradley takes the flats* in hand. But whatever it may be, I don't part with this document—this marriage certificate of Sir Piers Rookwood, that I told you of, unless I get the dibs† in hand, or screens‡ to the amount."

"Right, Captain—stick to the jark," cried Wilder, "that's as good as caz."

"It's a prime stake that," ejaculated Rust.

"Stake, or no stake," interrupted Dick, "my word is at stake—my honour as a Tobyman is at stake—and if Sir Luke don't settle with me this morning, he must wait my convenience. I'm pledged to be in London to-morrow."

"Leave Yorkshire for Rumville," cried Wilder, "why you haven't tried the North Riding yet?"

"My *riding* must be to the South, in the first

* Cards. † Cash. ‡ Bank-notes.

place," replied Dick. "I'm engaged in a *job* with Tom King—you have heard of Tom, the gentleman Highwayman as he is called—a better fellow never breathed—nor a bolder; —we're sworn brothers—I wouldn't disappoint him, to prove the legitimacy of any bloody hand in Christendom."

"But the jark—" grumbled Rust; "what becomes of that, Captain, in the meantime?"

"It must take its chance. I shan't be many days away. Bess is no lagger. You shall see what she can do. I'll meet you at our crib as before."

"But, Captain," still grumbled Rust, "you won't throw us over the bridge—we're *in it* as well as yourself, you know."

"Crack such whids again, Rob Rust," replied Dick, in a towering voice, "and I'll crack your thick sconce in answer to them. As you were concerned, you shall have your share in the reg'lars—but look out for some other leader, you serve no more with Dick Turpin."

Rust would fain have appeased his Captain, but Dick was evidently offended.

"Ha!" exclaimed he, drawing a pistol with a suddenness that made Rob start—adding, in a whisper—"we are watched. See you not how yon shadow falls from behind the wall?"

"I do," replied Wilder.

"The varmint shall be speedily unearthed," cried Rust, anxious to show his alacrity—and both robbers rushed to the spot.

In another instant the shadow manifested itself in a most unsubstantial personage, booted, spurred, and mud-bespattered. He was brought before our Highwayman, who had meanwhile vaulted into his saddle.

"Mr. Coates!" cried Dick, bursting into a loud laugh at the ridiculous figure presented to his view, "or the mud deceives me."

"It does not deceive you, Captain Turpin," replied the Attorney; "you do indeed behold that twice unfortunate person."

"What brings you here?" asked Dick. "Ah! I see. You are come to pay me my wager."

"I thought you gave me a *discharge* for

that," rejoined Coates, unable, even in his distress, to resist the too-tempting quibble.

"True—but it was *in blank*," replied Turpin readily; "and that don't hold good in law you know. But here you are again. You have thrown away a second chance. Play or pay, all the world over. I shan't *let you off* so easily this time, depend upon it. Come, post the pony—or take your measure on that sod. No more replications or rejoinders, Sir, but out with the blunt. How dare you bandy jokes at the point of the pistol?"

"No!" replied Coates—"You are better able to *keep up the ball*, than I am."

"Shall we break his neck, or shoot him?" cried Wilder.

"Fly the mags *, and let's see," replied Rust; "if heads, we scrag him—if tails, *wice werser*."

"I'm sure I don't know which is worser," muttered Coates.

* Toss up halfpence.

"A truce to this," exclaimed Turpin; "leave him alone—overhawl his toggery—Fake his clies. Let us see what he has about him."

"In the twinkling of a bed post," replied Rust. "We'll turn him inside out. What's here?" cried he—searching the Attorney's pockets.—"A brace of barkers," handing a pair of pistols to Turpin; "a haddock, stuffed with nothing I'm thinking; one quid, two coach wheels, half a bull, three hogs, and a kick*; a d——d dickey concern, Captain!"

"Three hogs and a kick," muttered Coates, "the knave says true enough."

"Bug over the rag†," cried Turpin. "Is there any thing else?"

"Only an old snuffy fogle, and a pewter sneezer."

"No reader? Try his hoxter‡."

* A guinea—two dollars, half-a-crown, three shillings, and sixpence. Rust's elegant enumeration of the money, reminds us of a waiter at one of the clubs, giving orders to a fellow-servant below stairs, who vociferated—"One ox—two mocks—three peas—and a bully!"

† Hand over the money. ‡ Inside coat pocket.

"Here's a pit-man *, Captain."

"Give it me.—Ah! this will do," cried Dick, examining the contents of the pocket-book; "this is a glorious windfall indeed—a bill of exchange for £.500—payable *on demand*—Eh! Mr. Coates—quick, indorse it, Sir—here's pen and ink—rascal, if you attempt to tear the bill I'll blow your brains out—steady, Sir sign—good—" added he, as Coates most reluctantly indorsed the bill. "You have now fairly paid your wager, and I'm sure you won't begrudge another hundred or so, to *make up the difference* with your friends there. Sorry I can't return you the change out, Sir; off to town, and shall want some small steven †, for the dubs at the knapping jiggers‡.—Eh! what's this?—my Lady Rookwood's superscription!—Excuse me, Mr. Coates, but I must have a peep at her Ladyship's billet doux.—All's safe with me—man of honour—I must detain your reader a moment longer."

"You should take charge of yourself then,"

* A small pocket book. † Money.

‡ Turnpike men.

replied Coates, sulkily—"*You* appear to be my reader."

"Bravo," cried Turpin. "You may jest now with impunity, Mr. Coates. You have paid dear enough for your jokes, and when should a man be allowed to be pleasant, if not at his own *expense;* ha, ha. What's this?" exclaimed he, opening the letter—"a fawney*, as I'm awake, and from her Ladyship's own fair famm † I'll be sworn, for it bears her chant ‡ ineffacebly impressed as your image upon her heart, eh, Coates. Egad, you are a lucky dog, after all, to receive *such* a favour from *such* a lady; ha, ha. Meantime, I'll take care of it for you," continued Dick, slipping the ring on his little finger.

Dick, we have before remarked, had a turn for mimicry; (he was almost as largely endowed with the faculty of imitation as our own inimitable Yates, who, like some weird magician, can make the "great departed flit and talk before us);" and it was with an irresistible feeling of

* A Ring. † Finger. ‡ Cipher.

deferential awe creeping over him, that Coates heard the contents of Lady Rookwood's epistle, delivered with an enunciation as peremptory and imperious as that of her Ladyship's self. The letter was hastily indited, but in a clear firm hand, and partook of its writer's bold decision of character. Dick found no difficulty in deciphering it. Thus ran the missive:—

"Assured of your devotion and secrecy, I "commit my own honour, and that of my son, "to your charge. Time will not permit me to "see you, or I would not write; but I place "myself entirely in your hands. You will not "dare to betray my confidence. To the point: "A Major Mowbray has just arrived here with "intelligence, that the body of Susan Bradley "(you will know to whom I allude) has been "removed from our family vault by a Romish "Priest and his assistants. How it came there, "or wherefore it was removed, I know not.—It "is not my present purpose to inquire. Suffice "it, that it now lies in a vault beneath the ruins "of Davenham Priory. My son, Sir Ranulph,

" who has lent a credulous ear to the artful
" tales of the impostor, who calls this woman
" mother, is at present engaged in arming certain
" of the household, and of the tenantry, to seize
" upon, and bring away this body, as resistance
" is apprehended from a horde of gipsies who
" infest the ruins. Now mark me. THAT
" BODY MUST NOT BE FOUND. Be it your busi-
" ness to prevent its discovery. Take the
" fleetest horse you can procure—spare neither
" whip nor spur—haste to the Priory—procure
" by any means, and at any expense, the assist-
" ance of the gipsies. Find out the body—con-
" ceal it — destroy it—cut it into a thousand
" pieces—do what you will, so my son find it not.
" Fear not his resentment—I will bear you harm-
" less of the consequences with him. You will act
" upon my responsibility. I pledge my honour
" for your safety. My curse shall rest on
" Ranulph's head if he molest you. Use all
" dispatch, and calculate upon due requital of
" your service from

" MAUDE ROOKWOOD."

"Haste, and God speed you!"

"God speed you," echoed Dick, in his own voice contemptuously. "The devil drive you, would have been a fitter postscript. And so it was upon this precious errand you came, Mr. Coates?"

"Exactly," replied the Attorney; "but I find the premises pre-occupied—fast as I have ridden, you were here before me."

"And what do you now propose to do?" asked Turpin.

"Bargain with you for the body," replied Coates, coolly.

"Bargain with *me*," shouted Dick—"Do you take me for a resurrection cove—for a dealer in dead stock, eh! sirrah?"

"I take you for one sufficiently *alive*, in a general way, to his own interests"—returned Coates. "These gentlemen may, perhaps, not be quite so scrupulous, when they hear my proposals.

"Hark!" interrupted Turpin—"I hear the tramp of horses' hoofs, without; hark — that shout."

"Make your own terms before they come," insinuated Coates. "Leave all to me—I'll put 'em on a wrong scent."

"To the devil with your terms"—cried Turpin; "the signal!" and he pulled the trigger of one of Coates's pistols, which he held in his hand, the shot of which, rang in the ears of the astounded Attorney, as it whizzed past him."

"Drag him into the mouth of the vault," thundered Turpin, "he will be a capital cover in case of attack. Look to your sticks—and keep tout *,—away."

Vainly did the unfortunate Attorney kick and struggle—swear and scream—his hat was pushed over his eyes, his bob wig thrust into his mouth, and his legs tripped from under him. Thus blind, dumb, and half suffocated, was he hurried within the entrance of the cell.

Turpin, meanwhile dashed to the arched outlet of the ruin. He there drew in the rein, and Black Bess stood motionless as a statue.

As his quick eye ranged over the spreading

* Keep guard.

sward in front of the ancient Priory, Dick's brow became for an instant contracted, and he bit his lips with vexation. But the feeling was transient—the next instant saw him the same easy reckless being that he had been before; there was a little more paleness in his cheek than usual; that was all—but then his eyes were keener, and brighter, and his knees involuntarily clasped his saddle the more firmly—there was no other outward symptom of anxiety about him. It would be no impeachment to Dick's valour, were it necessary for us here to admit, that a slight tremor crossed him, as he scanned the formidable array of his opponents. No such admission is, however, necessary.—Dick himself would have been the last man to notice it—nor shall we do the memory of our undaunted highwayman any such dishonour. Turpin was intrepid to a fault—he was rash—apt to run into risks for the mere pleasure of getting out of them; danger was his delight, and the degree of excitement was always in proportion to the peril incurred. After the first glance, he

became, to use his own words, "as cool as a cucumber—" and continued as long as they permitted him, like a skilful commander, calmly to calculate the numerical strength of his adversaries, and to arrange his own plan of resistance.

This troop of horsemen, for such it was, might probably amount, in the aggregate, to twenty men, and presented an appearance like that of a strong muster at a rustic fox chase, due allowance being made for the various weapons of offence; to wit, naked sabres, firelocks, and a world of huge horse pistols, which the present *field* carried along with them. This resemblance was heightened by the presence of an old huntsman, and a gamekeeper or two, in scarlet and green jackets, and a few yelping hounds, that had followed after them. The majority of the crew consisted of sturdy yeomen—some of whom, mounted upon wild unbroken colts, had pretty lives of it to maintain their seats, and curveted about in "most admired disorder;" others were seated upon more docile, but quite as provoking specimens of the cart-

horse breed, whose sluggish sides, reckless alike of hobnailed heel, or ash sapling, refused to obey their riders' intimations to move—while others again brought stiff, wrong-headed ponies to the charge—obstinate, impracticable little brutes, that seem to prefer revolving on their own axis, and describing absurd rotatory motions, to proceeding in the direct and proper course pointed out to them. Dick could scarce forbear from laughing at these ridiculous manœuvres, but his attention was chiefly attracted towards three individuals, who were evidently the leaders of this warlike expedition. In the thin tall figure of the first of these, he recognised Ranulph Rookwood.—With the features and person of the second of the group, he was totally unacquainted, but fancied (nor incorrectly fancied) that his military bearing, or, as he would have expressed it, "the soldier-like cut of his jib," could belong to no other than Major Mowbray.—In the round, rosy countenance, and robustious person of the last of the

trio, he discovered his ancient ally, Titus Tyrconnel.

"Ah, Titus my jewel—are you there?" exclaimed Dick, as he distinguished the Irishman. "Come, I have *one* friend among them, whom I may welcome.—Soh, they see me now. Off they come, pall-mall. Back Bess, back—slowly wench, slowly—there—stand." And Bess again remained motionless.

The report of Turpin's pistol had reached the ears of the troop, and as all were upon the alert, he had scarcely presented himself at the archway many seconds, when a loud shout was raised, and the whole cavalcade galloped towards him, creating, as may be imagined, the wildest disorder—each yelling, as they neared the arch, and concentrated their forces into the other's way, mutually belabouring each other with oaths and blows, and reciprocating their cuffs and concussions with such unlimited good will, that, had Turpin ever read Ariosto or Cervantes, or heard of the discord of King Agramante's

camp, this *mêlée* must have struck him as its realization. As it was, entertaining little apprehension of the result of this on-slaught, he shouted encouragement to them. Scarcely, however, had the foremost horseman disentangled himself from the press of his companions, and, struggling to the door, was in the act of levelling his pistol at Turpin's head, when a well-directed ball pierced the brain of his charger, and horse and man rolled to the ground. Vowing vengeance, a second succeeded, and was in like manner compelled to bite the dust.

"That will let old Peter know that Ranulph Rookwood is at hand," exclaimed Dick. "I shan't throw away another shot."

The scene at the archway was now one of complete confusion. Terrified by the shots, some of the boors would have drawn back, while others, in mid career, advanced, and propelled them forwards. It was like the meeting of two tides. Here and there, regardless of the bit, and scared by the firing, would a wild colt break all bounds,

and, hurling his rider in the air, dart off into the green; or, in another case, rush forwards, and encountering the prostrate cattle that strewed the entrance to the Priory hall, would stumble, and precipitate his master neck over heels at the very feet of his enemy. During all this tumult, a few shots were fired at the highwayman, which, without doing him one jot of mischief, served materially to increase their own confusion.

The voice of Turpin was now heard, above the din and turmoil, to sound a parley; and as he appeared disposed to offer no opposition, some of his antagonists ventured to raise themselves from the ground, and to approach him.

"I demand to be led to Sir Ranulph Rookwood," said Turpin.

"He is here," said Ranulph, riding up. "Villain, you are my prisoner."

"As you list, Sir Ranulph," returned Dick, coolly: "but let me have a word in private with you ere you do aught you may repent hereafter."

"Repent, villain—deliver up your arms, or—"

"My pistols are at your service," replied Dick, "I have just discharged them."

"You may have others—we must search you."

"Hold," cried Dick; "if you will not listen to me, read that letter;" and he handed Ranulph his mother's letter. It was without the envelope, which he had thrown aside.

"My mother's hand," exclaimed Ranulph, reddening with anger, as he hastily perused its contents. "And she sent this to you? You lie, villain—'tis a forgery."

"Let this speak for me," returned Dick, holding out the finger upon which Lady Rookwood's ring was placed? "Know you that cipher?"

"You have stolen it," exclaimed Ranulph. "My mother," added he, in a deep stern whisper, articulated only for Turpin's hearing, "would never have entrusted her honour to your keeping."

"She has entrusted more—her life," replied

Dick, in a careless tone. "She would have bribed me to do murder."

"Murder!" echoed Ranulph, aghast.

"Ay, to murder your brother," returned Dick; "but let that pass. You have read that note. I have acted solely upon your mother's responsibility. Lady Rookwood's *honour* is pledged for my safety. Of course her son will set me free."

"Villain—I know not—yet my mother——"

"Is in my power. Betray me, and you betray her. Free me, and none shall ever be the wiser."

"How shall I act?" mused Ranulph. "My duty to society, my respect for the laws he hath outraged, impel me to seize his person—but my mother—I cannot bring shame upon her head—and then her curse——"

"Will rest upon thy head, if thou molest me," said Turpin.

"No more," returned Ranulph, sternly. "Go your ways—you are free."

"Pledge me your word of honour that I am safe."

Ranulph had scarcely given his pledge, when Major Mowbray rode furiously up. A deep flush of anger burst upon his cheeks; his sword was drawn in his hand. He glanced at Turpin, as if he would have felled him from the saddle.

"This is the ruffian," cried the Major, fiercely, "who robbed my mother and my sister. The post-boy knew him the moment he came up. Where are they, villain?—Whither are they gone?—answer!"

"I know not," replied Turpin, calmly. "Did not the lad tell you they were rescued?"

"Rescued!—by whom?" asked Ranulph, with great emotion.

"By one who calls himself Sir Luke Rookwood," answered Turpin, with a meaning smile.

"By him!" ejaculated Ranulph! "Where are they now?"

"I have already answered that question," said Dick. "I repeat it, I know not."

"You are my prisoner," cried the Major, seizing Turpin's bridle.

"I have Sir Ranulph's word of honour for my safety," rejoined Turpin. "Let go my rein."

"How is this?" asked the Major, incredulously.

"Ask me not. Release him," replied Ranulph. "I will explain all hereafter. Let us search for them—for Eleanor. Surely, after this, you will help us to find them," added he, addressing Turpin.

"I wish, with all my soul, I could do so," replied the highwayman.

"I seed the ladies cross the brook, and enter these old ruins," interposed the post-boy, who had now joined the party. "I seed 'em from where I stood in the hill side, and as I kept a pretty sharp look out, and have a tolerably bright eye of my own, I don't think as how they ever comed out again."

"And is that all you've got to say upon the subject," exclaimed a voice, with whose accent Dick was perfectly familiar? "then, by my sowl,

you might just as well have kept that ugly mouth of your's shut; for sure, and should we not have met the ladies, bless their hearts, if they'd come out of this place at all. Don't we know that they've hidden themselves here to get out of the way of that vagabond?"

"Easy words, friend Titus, if you please," said Dick.

"Aisy words; and is it to me you're talking, you thief of the night—you notorious rapparee," replied Titus: "because if it is, I'd like to know how it is that you are after addressing me as your friend; but that it would be beneath me to fight with a highwayman, I'd have satisfaction for the affront on the spot; by St. Patrick! and so I would."

"You may have it in a twinkling, if that's your desire," returned Dick. "I'm as free as air. One of these gentlemen will lend me a pistol, and we'll have it out at once."

"Lend you a pistol," said Titus; "by my faith, Sir, but your modesty will never stand in your way. And do you think if they would lend you one, that I'd demane myself by

fighting with you. Do you think I'd make such a hole in my manners. It is plain you know little of the pride of the Tyrconnels. While you were Jack Palmer, the thing would have been all mighty well—but as you are blown as Dick Turpin, the thing's clane out of the question. Fight with a rapparee!—hout tout man, I'd lose my grade in society by it, entirely, and, like my friend Doctor Polyphamus Small, I've too much of a *caste in my eye* for that."

"None of your d——d palaver, Titus," replied Turpin, contemptuously; "if you won't fight, say so like a man, and don't throw your cowardice upon your caste. *Your* caste indeed. What would society say, were I, Dick Turpin, to screw your nose for you, which I feel devilishly induced to do, for your insolence."

The further progress of this dispute was interrupted by a loud exclamation from Ranulph Rookwood.

"Some one is hidden within yon fissure in the wall," cried he; "I see a figure move."

And he flung himself from his horse, rushing

towards the mouth of the cell. Imitating his example, Major Mowbray followed his friend, sword in hand.

"The game begins now in right earnest," said Dick to himself; "the old fox will be soon unearthed—I must look to my own bull dogs," and he slided his hand quietly into his pocket.

Just as Ranulph and the Major reached the recess, they were startled by the sudden apparition of the ill-fated Attorney.

"Mr. Coates!" exclaimed Ranulph, in surprise. "What do you here, Sir?"

"I—I—that is—Sir Ranulph — you must excuse me, Sir—particular business—can't say," returned the trembling Attorney; for at this instant his eye caught that of Turpin, and the ominous reflection of a polished-steel barrel, held carelessly towards him. He was aware, also, that he was held in like manner, *en jeu*, as the French have it, by Rust and Wilder behind; those ruffians having threatened him with a brace of slugs in his brain if he dared to betray

their hiding place. "It is necessary that I should be *guarded* in my answers," murmured he.

"Is there any one within that place beside yourself?" said the Major, making a movement thither.

"No, Sir, no," answered Coates hastily, fancying at the same time that he heard the click of the pistol that was to be his death-warrant.

"How came you here, Sir?" demanded Ranulph.

"Do you mean in this identical spot?" replied Coates.

"You can have no difficulty in answering that question," said the Major, sternly.

"Pardon me, Sir—I find considerable difficulty in answering any question, situated as I am."

"Have you seen Miss Mowbray?" asked Ranulph, eagerly.

"Or my mother?" said the Major in the same breath.

"Neither," replied Coates.

"I suspect you are deceiving us, Sir," said the

Major. "Your manner is confused—I am convinced that you know more of this matter than you choose to explain; and if you do not satisfy me at once fully and explicitly, I vow to heaven——" and the Major's sword described a glittering circle round his head.

"Are you privy to their concealment?" asked Ranulph. "Have you seen aught of them, or of Luke Bradley?"

"Speak, or this moment is your last," said the Major.

"If it is my last, I *cannot* speak," returned Coates, "I begin to think the world is at an end."

"And you positively assure me you have not seen them?" said Ranulph.

Turpin here winked at Coates. The Attorney understood him.

"I don't positively assert that," faltered he.

"How! you have seen them?" shouted Ranulph.

"Where are they?—In safety—speak!"

Another expressive gesture from the high-

wayman, communicated to the Attorney the nature of his reply.

"Without Sir—without—yonder," he replied. "I will show you myself—follow, gentlemen, follow." And away scampered Coates, without once venturing to look behind him.

In an instant the ruined hall was deserted, and Turpin alone left behind. In the excitement of the moment, his presence had been forgotten. In an instant afterwards, the *arena* was again occupied by a company equally numerous. Rust and Wilder issued from their hiding places, followed by a throng of the gipsy crew.

"Where is Sir Luke Rookwood?" asked Turpin.

"He remains below," was the answer returned.

"And Peter Bradley?"

"Stays there likewise."

"No matter. Now make ready, palls. Give 'em one shout—Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!" replied the crowd, at the top of their voices.

Ranulph Rookwood and his companions heard this shout. Mr. Coates had already explained the stratagem which had been practised upon them by the wily highwayman, as well as the perilous situation in which he himself had been placed; and they were in the act of returning, to make good his capture, when the loud shouts of the crew arrested them. From the clamour, it was evident that some considerable reinforcement must have arrived from some unlooked-for quarter, and although burning to be avenged upon the audacious highwayman, the Major felt that it would be a task of difficulty, and that extreme caution could alone ensure their success. With difficulty restraining the impatience of Ranulph, who could scarcely brook these few minutes of needful delay, Major Mowbray gave particular instructions to each of the men in detail, and caused several of them to dismount. By this arrangement, Mr. Coates found himself accommodated with a horse, and a pair

of pistols, with which latter he vowed to wreak his vengeance upon some of his recent tormentors. After a short space of time occupied in this manner, the troop slowly advanced towards the postern, in much better order than upon the previous occasion; but the stoutest of them quailed, as they caught sight of the numerous gipsy gang drawn out in battle array, within the Abbey walls. Each party scanned the other's movements, in silence and wonder, anxiously awaiting, yet in a measure dreading, their leader's signal to begin. That signal was not long wanting. A shot from the ranks of Rookwood, did instant and bitter execution. Rob Rust was stretched lifeless upon the ground. Nothing more was needed. The action now became general. Fire arms were discharged on both sides without much damage to either party—but a rush being made by a detachment of horse, headed by Major Mowbray, the conflict soon became more serious. The gipsies, after the first fire, threw aside their pistols, and fought with long knives, with which they in-

flicted desperate gashes, both on men and horses. Major Mowbray was slightly wounded in the thigh, and his steed receiving the blow intended for himself, stumbled, and threw his rider. Luckily for the Major, Ranulph Rookwood was at hand, and with the butt end of a heavy-handled pistol, felled the ruffian to the earth, just as he was upon the point of repeating the thrust.

Turpin, meanwhile, had taken comparatively a small share in the conflict. He seemed to content himself by acting upon the defensive, and except, in the case of Titus Tyrconnel, whom, espying amongst the crowd, he had considerably alarmed, by sending a bullet through his wig, he did not fire a single shot.

He also succeeded in unhorseing Coates, by hurling with great dexterity, the empty pistol at his head. Though apparently unconcerned in the skirmish, he did not flinch from it, but kept his ground unyieldingly. "A charmed life" he seemed to bear, for amid the shower of bullets,

many of which were especially aimed at himself, he came off unhurt.

"He that's born to be hanged, will never be drownded, that's certain," said Titus. "It's no use trying to bring him down. But by Jasus he's spiled my best hat and wig, any how. There's a hole in my beaver as big as a crown piece."

"But your own crown's safe, and that's some satisfaction," said Coates, "whereas mine has a bump on it, as large as a swan's egg. Ah!—if we could only get behind him."

The strife continued to rage without intermission; and though there were now several ghastly evidences of its fury, in the shape of wounded men, and slaughtered or disabled horses, whose gaping wounds had flooded the turf with gore, it was still difficult to see upon which side victory would eventually declare herself. The gipsies, though by far the greater sufferers of the two, firmly maintained their ground. Drenched in the blood of the horses they had wounded, and brandishing their long knives, they

presented a formidable and terrific appearance, the effect of which was not at all diminished by their wild yells and savage gesticulations. On the other hand, headed by Major Mowbray and Ranulph, the troop of yeomen pressed on undauntedly; and where the sturdy farmers could get a firm gripe of their lithe antagonists, or deliver a blow with their ox-like fists, they seldom failed to make good the advantages which superior weight and strength gave them. It will thus be seen that as yet they were pretty well matched—numbers were in favour of the gipsies, but courage was equally distributed, and perhaps, what is emphatically called "bottom," was in favour of the rustics. Be this as it may, from what had already occurred, there was every prospect of a very serious termination to the fight.

From time to time, Turpin glanced to the entrance of the cell, in the expectation of seeing Sir Luke Rookwood make his appearance; and, as he was constantly disappointed in his expectation, he could not conceal his chagrin. At length he resolved to dispatch a messenger to him, and

one of the crew accordingly departed upon this errand. He returned presently with a look of such blank dismay, that Turpin might have addressed him in the words of Macbeth—

> The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon,
> Where gott'st thou that goose look?—

But Macbeth himself was scarcely more stunned by the intelligence of the invasion, more "sick at heart" than Turpin, as the communication was breathed in his ear.

In our hasty narrative of the fight, we have not paused to particularize, nor have we enumerated the list of combatants. Amongst them, however, were a few well known to the reader; to wit, Jerry Juniper, the Knight of Malta, and Zoroaster. Excalibur, as may be conceived, had not been idle; but that bright blade had been shivered by Ranulph Rookwood in the early stage of the business, and the Knight left weaponless. Zoroaster, who was not merely a worshipper of fire, but a thorough milling cove, had engaged to some

purpose in a pugilistic encounter with the rustics; and, having fought several rounds, now "bore his blushing honours thick upon him." Jerry, like Turpin, had remained tolerably quiescent. "The proper moment," he said, "had not arrived." A fatality seemed to attend Turpin's immediate companions. Rust was the first who fell; Wilder also was now among the slain.

Things were precisely in this condition when the messenger returned. A marked change was instantly perceptible in Turpin's manner. He no longer looked on with indifference. He seemed angry and distrustful. He gnawed his lip, ever a sign with him of vexation. He addressed a few words to those about him, and then spoke more loudly to the rest of the crew. Being in the jargon of the tawney tribe, his words were not intelligible to the opposite party; but their import was soon made known by the almost instant and total relinquishment of the field by the gipsies. They took to their heels at once, to a man, leaving only a few

desperately wounded behind them; and, flying along the intricate ruins of the Priory, baffled all pursuit, wherever it was attempted. Jerry Juniper was the last in the retreat; but, upon receiving a hint from Turpin, vaulted like a roe over the heads of his adversaries, and made good his escape.

Turpin alone remained. He stood like a lion at bay, quietly regarding the huntsmen hurtling around him. Ranulph Rookwood rode up, and bade him surrender.

"Detain me not," cried he, in a voice of thunder. "If you would save her who is dear to you, descend into that vault. Off I say."

And Turpin shook away, with ease, the grasp which Ranulph had laid upon him.

"Villain, you do not escape me this time," said Major Mowbray, interposing himself between Turpin and the outlet.

"Major Mowbray, I would not have your blood upon my head," said Dick. "Let me pass," and he levelled a pistol at the Major.

"Fire if you dare," said the Major, raising

his sword. "You pass not. I will die rather than allow you to escape. Barricade the door. Strike him down, if he attempt to pass."

"I will not take your life," said Turpin. "Go seek your mother and sister within yon vault. You will find employment enough there."

Saying which, he suddenly forced Bess to back a few yards; and then, striking his heels sharply into her sides, ere his purpose could be divined by the spectators, charged, and cleared the lower part of the mouldering Priory walls. This feat was apparently accomplished at no great effort by his admirable and unequalled mare.

"By the powers," cried Titus, "and he's given us the slip, after all. And just when we thought to make sure of him too. Why, Mr. Coates, that wall must be higher than a five-barred gate, or any stone wall in my own country. It's just the most extraordinary lepp I ever set eyes on."

"The devil's in the fellow, certainly, or in his horse," returned Coates; "but if he escapes me,

I'll forgive him. I know whither he's bound. I'll follow him.—I'll track him like a blood-hound, slowly but surely. Recollect the hare and the tortoise. The race is not always to the swift. What say you? 'Tis a match for five hundred pounds—nay, for five thousand; for there is a certain marriage certificate in the way—a glorious golden venture. You shall go halves, if we win. We'll have him dead, or alive. What say you for London, Mr. Tyrconnel?—Shall we start at once?

"With all my sowl," replied Titus. "I'm with you." And away this *par nobile* scoured.

Ranulph meantime had plunged into the vault. The floor was slippery, and he had nigh stumbled. Loud and deep lamentations, and a wailing sound, like that of a lament for the dead, boomed in his ears. A light at the farther extremity of the vault attracted his attention. He was filled with terrible forebodings, but even these were not so terrible as suspense. He rushed towards the light. He passed the massive

pillars, and there, by the ruddy torch flame, discovered two female figures. One was that of an old woman, fantastically attired, wringing her hands and moaning, or gibbering wild strains in broken discordant, yet pathetic tones. The other was Mrs. Mowbray. Both were images of despair. Before them lay an object of dread. He noticed not that old woman—he scarce saw Mrs. Mowbray—he beheld only THAT! It was a female figure, but it moved not—it breathed not. The light fell imperfectly upon the face—he could not discern the features, but the veil in which it was swathed—that veil was *her's*!—was Eleanor's! He asked no more.

With a wild cry he stumbled forward.—"Eleanor, my beloved," shrieked he.

Mrs. Mowbray started at his voice, but appeared stunned, and helpless.

"She is dead," said Ranulph, stooping towards the body. "Dead—dead!"

"Ay," echoed the old woman, in accents of equal anguish—"dead—dead!"

"But this is *not* Eleanor," exclaimed he, as

he viewed the features more closely. "This face, though beautiful, is not her's. This dishevelled hair is black. The long lashes that shade her cheek are black. She is scarce dead. The hand I clasp is yet warm—the fingers are pliant."

"Yet she is dead," said the old woman, in a broken voice. "She is slain."

"Who hath slain her?" asked Ranulph.

"I—I—her mother's mother, slew her."

"Thou!" exclaimed Ranulph, horror stricken. "And where is Eleanor!" asked he. "Was she not here?"

"Better she were here now, even though she were as that poor maid," groaned Mrs. Mowbray, "than where she is."

"Where is she, then?" asked Ranulph, with frantic eagerness?

"Fled! Whither I know not."

"With whom?"

"With Sir Luke Rookwood—with Alan Rookwood. They have borne her hence—Ranulph, you are too late."

"Gone—gone," cried Ranulph. "How

escaped they? There appears to be but one entrance to this vault. I will search each nook and cranny."

"'Tis vain," replied Mrs. Mowbray. "There is another outlet through yon cell. By that passage did they escape."

"Too true—too true," shouted Ranulph, who flew to examine the cell. "And wherefore followed you not?"

"The stone rolled to its mouth, and resisted my efforts; I could not follow."

"My sister!" exclaimed Major Mowbray, who had now joined them. "Where is she?"

"Gone," said Ranulph, in accents of despair.

"Gone," echoed the Major. "And Father Ambrose?"

"Murdered," answered Mrs. Mowbray.

"She is gone—she is lost to me for ever," cried Ranulph bitterly.

"No," exclaimed Barbara, clutching his arm.

"Place thy trust in me, and I will find her for thee."

"Thou!" said Ranulph.

"Even I," replied Barbara. "Thy wrongs shall be righted—my Sybil be avenged."

END OF BOOK THE THIRD.

BOOK IV.

The Highwayman.

Many a fine fellow with a genius extensive enough to have effected universal reformation, has been doomed to perish by the halter ; but does not such a man's renown extend through centuries and tens of centuries; while many a prince would be overlooked in history, were it not the historian's interest to increase the number of his pages? Nay, when the traveller sees a gibbet, does he not exclaim, "that fellow was no fool!" and lament the hardness of the times?

SCHILLER.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

Hind. Drink deep, my brave boys, of the bastinado,
Of Stramazons, tinctures, and slie passatas;
Of the carricado, and rare embrocado,
Of blades, and rapier hilts of surest guard,
Of the Vincentio and Burgundian ward.
Have we not bravely tossed this bombast foil button?
Win gold and wear gold boys, 'tis we that merit it.

PRINCE OF PRIGS' REVELS,

An excellent Comedy, replete with various conceits and Tarltonian mirth.

ALLOWING a space of three or four days to elapse without notice, we shall now transport our readers to the neighbourhood of the metropolis, and, with their permission, conduct them to a retired arbour adjoining the bowling green of the old hostel of Kilburn Wells.

The present straggling suburb, known as Kilburn, had scarcely been called into existence

a century ago, and the inn of which we speak, with a few detached farm-houses, were the sole habitations to be found in the present populous vicinage. The place of refreshment for the ruralizing cockney of 172– was an ancient substantial-looking tenement of the good old stamp, with great bay windows, and a balcony in front, bearing as its ensign the jovial visage of the lusty knight, Jack Falstaff. Shaded by a spreading elm, stood a circular bench, embracing the aged trunk of the tree; sufficiently tempting, no doubt, to incline the wanderer on those dusty ways (the Edgware Road has ever been proverbial for its dust and its paupers) to "rest and be thankful," and to cry *encore* to a frothing tankard of the best ale to be obtained within the chimes of Bow Bells.

Upon a table, green as the privet and holly that formed the walls of the bower, was placed a great china bowl, one of those leviathan memorials of bygone wassailry, which we may sometimes espy (reversed in token of its desuetude), perched on the top of an old

japanned closet, but seldom, if ever, encounter in its proper position at the genial board. All the appliances of festivity were at hand. Pipes and rummers strewed the board. Perfume, subtle yet mellow, as of pine and lime, exhaled from out the bowl, and, mingling with the scent of a neighbouring bed of mignionette, and the subdued odour of the Indian weed, formed altogether as delectable an atmosphere of sweets as one would wish to inhale on a melting August afternoon. So at least thought the inmates of the arbour, nor did they, by any means, confine themselves to the gratification of a single sense. The ambrosial contents of the china bowl proved as delicious to the taste, as its bouquet to the smell; while the eyesight was soothed and gratified by reposing on the smooth sward of the bowling green, spread out immediately before it, or in dwelling upon gently undulating meads, terminating at about a mile's distance in the woody, spire-crowned heights of Hampstead.

At the left of the table was seated, or rather lounged, a slender, elegant-looking young man,

with dark languid eyes, sallow complexion, and features wearing that peculiarly pensive expression, often communicated by dissipation; an expression which, we regret to say, is sometimes found more pleasing than it ought to be in the eyes of the gentle sex. Habited in a light summer riding dress, fashioned according to the taste of the time, but of plain, and unpretending material, and rather under, than overdressed, he had, perhaps, on that very account, perfectly the air of a gentleman. There was, altogether, an absence of pretension about him, which, combined with great apparent self-possession, contrasted very forcibly with the vulgar assurance of his showy companions. The figure of the youth was slight, even to fragility, giving little outward manifestation of the vigour of frame he in reality possessed. His features would have been altogether effeminate, but for a pair of raven whiskers, with which his cheeks were shaded. To save the reader any speculation as to who this spark might be, we will at once acquaint him with his

name and calling. He was a no less distinguished personage than Tom King, a noted Tobyman of his time, who obtained, from his appearance and address, the *sobriquet* of the "Gentleman Highwayman."

Tom was indeed a pleasant fellow in his day. His career was brief, but brilliant: your meteors are ever momentary. He was a younger son of a good family—had good blood in his veins—but not a groat in his pockets. According to the old song,

> When he arrived at man's estate,
> It was *all the estate* he had!

And all the estate he was ever likely to have. Nevertheless, though he had no income, he contrived, as he said, to live as if he had; a miracle which has not been solely confined to himself. For a moneyless man, he had rather expensive habits. He kept his three nags; and, if fame does not belie him, a like number of mistresses;—nay, if we are to place any faith in certain scandalous chronicles to which we have had access, he was for some time the favoured

lover of a celebrated actress, who for the time supplied him with the means of keeping up his showy establishment. But things could not long hold thus. Tom was a model of infidelity, and that was the only failing his mistress could not overlook. She dismissed him at a moment's notice. Unluckily too, he had other propensities, which contributed to involve him. He had a taste for the turf—a taste for play—was well known in the hundreds of Drury, and cut no mean figure at Howell's, and the Faro tables thereanent. He was the glory of the Smyrna, d'Osyndar's, and other chocolate houses of the day, and it was at this time he fell into the hands of certain dexterous sharpers, by whom he was first plucked, and subsequently patronized. Under their tuition he improved wonderfully. He turned his wit and talent to some account. He began to open his eyes. His nine days' blindness was over. The dog saw; but, spite of his quickness, he was at length discovered, and ejected from Howell's in a manner that left him no alternative. He

must either have called out his adversary, or go out himself. He preferred the latter, and took to the road; and in his new line, he had been eminently successful. Fortunately, he had no scruples to get over. Tom had what Sir Walter Scott happily denominates "an indistinct notion of *meum* and *tuum*," and became confirmed in the opinion, that every thing he could lay hands upon constituted lawful spoil. And then, even those he robbed admitted that he was the most gentlemanlike highwayman they had ever had the fortune to meet with, and trusted they might always be so lucky. So popular did he become upon the road, that it was accounted a distinction to be stopped by him; he made a point of robbing none but gentlemen, and—Tom's shade would quarrel with us were we to omit them—ladies! His acquaintance with Turpin was singular, and originated in a *rencontre*. Struck with his appearance, Dick presented a pistol, and bade King deliver. The latter burst into a laugh, and an explanation immediately ensued. Thenceforward they became sworn

brothers—the Pylades and Orestes of the Road; and though seldom seen together in public, had many a merry moonlight ride in company.

Tom still maintained three mistresses, his valet, his groom (tiger we should have called him), "and many a change of clothes besides," says his biographer, "with which he appeared more like a lord than a highwayman." And what more, we should like to know, would a lord wish to have? Few younger sons, we believe, can boast so much; and it is chiefly on their account, with some remote view to the benefit of the unemployed youth of all professions, that we have enlarged so much upon Tom King's history. The road, we must beg to repeat, is still open—the chances are greater than they ever were—we fully believe it is *their* only road to preferment, and we are sadly in want of highwaymen!

Fancy Tom lounging at d'Osyndar's, carelessly tapping his boots on the steps—there he stands! Is he not a devilish good-looking gentlemanlike sort of fellow? You could never have

taken him for a highwayman but for our information. A waiter appears—supper is ordered at twelve—a broiled chicken and a bottle of Burgundy—his groom brings his nags to the door—he mounts. It is his custom to ride out on an evening—he is less liable to interruption*. At Marylebone Fields (now the Regents' Park) his groom leaves him. He has a mistress in the neighbourhood. He is absent for a couple of hours, and returns gay or dispirited, as his luck may have turned out. At twelve he is at supper, and has the night before him. How very easy all this seems. Can it be possible, we have no Tom Kings?

But to return to Tom as he was in the arbour. Judging from his manner, he appeared to be almost insensible of the presence of his companions, and to be scarcely a partaker in their revelry. His back was towards his immediate

* We have heard of a certain gentleman Tobyman, we forget whom, taking the horses from his curricle for a similar purpose, but we own we think King's the simpler plan, and quite practicable still. A cabriolet would be quite out of the question, but particularly easy to *stop!*

neighbour; his glass sparkled untouched at his elbow—and one hand, beautifully white and small, a mark of his birth and breeding (*crede* Byron), rested upon the edge of the table, while his thin delicate digits, palpably demonstrative of his faculty of adaptation (*crede* James Hardy Vaux), were employed with a silver toothpick. In other respects, he seemed to be lost in reverie, and was, in all probability, meditating new exploits.

Next to King, sat our old friend Jerry Juniper; not, however, the Jerry of the gipsies, but a much more showy-looking personage.—Jerry was no longer a gentleman of "three outs"—the difficulty would now have been to say what he was "without." Snake-like he had cast his slough, and rejoiced in new and brilliant investiture. His were "speaking garments, speaking pockets too." His linen was of the finest, his hose of the smartest. Gay rings glittered on his fingers—a crystal snuff box underwent graceful manipulation—a handsome gold repeater was sometimes drawn from its location with a

monstrous bunch of onions (*anglice* seals), depending from its massive chain. Lace adorned his wrists, and shoes (of which they had been long unconscious) with buckles nearly as large as themselves, confined his feet. A rich powdered peruke, and silver hilted sword, completed the gear of the transmogrified Jerry, or, as he now chose to be designated, Count Albert Conyers. The fact was, that Jerry, after the *fracas*, apprehensive that the country would be too hot for him, had, in company with Zoroaster, quitted the ranks of the canting crew, and made the best of his way to town. A lucky *spice** on the road set them up, and having some acquaintance with Tom King, the party on their arrival sought him out at his customary haunt, d'Osyndar's, and enlisted under his banners.

Tom received them with open arms, gave them unlimited use of his wardrobe, and only required a little trifling assistance in return.

* Foot-pad Robbery.

He had a grand scheme *in petto*, in the execution of which they could mainly asssist him. Jerry was a *Greek* by nature, and could *land* a flat as well as the best of them. Zoroaster was just the man to *lose* a fight; or, in the language of the *Fancy*, to *play a cross*. No two *legs* could serve Tom's purposes better; he welcomed them with fraternal affection.

But in the meantime, we must proceed to reconnoitre Jerry's opposite neighbour, who was, however, no other than that Upright Man,

> The Magus Zoroaster, that great name.
>
> SHELLEY.

Changed as was Juniper, the Magus was yet more whimsically metamorphosed. Some traces of Jerry still remained, but not a vestige was left of the original Dimber Damber. His tawny mother had not known her son. This alteration, however, was not owing to change of dress; it was the result of the punishment he had undergone at the "*Set to*" at the Priory. Not a feature was in its place; his swollen lip trespassed

upon the precincts of his nose, his nose trod hard upon his cheek, while his cheek again, not to be behind the rest, rose up like an apple-dumpling under his single eye—single we say—for alas!—there was no speculation in the other—his dexter daylight was utterly darkened—and indeed, the orb that remained, was as sanguine a luminary as ever struggled through a London fog at noon day. To borrow a couplet or two from the Laureate of the *Fancy:*

> ——— One of his peepers was put
> On the bankruptcy list, with his shop-windows shut,
> While the other had nearly as tag-rag a show,
> All rimmed round with black, like the *Courier* in woe.

One black patch decorated his rainbow-coloured cheek, another adorned his chin; a grinder or so having been dislodged, his pipe took possession of the aperture. His toggery was that of a member of the prize ring—what we now call a "belcher" bound his throat—a spotted *fogle* bandaged his *jobbernowl*, and shaded his right peeper, while a white beaver crowned the occiput of the Magus. And

though at first sight there would appear to be some incongruity in the association of such a battered character as the Upright Man, with his smart companions, the reader's wonder will rapidly diminish, when he reflects, that any distinguished P. C. man can ever find a ready passport to the most exclusive society. Viewed in this light, Zoroaster's familiarity with his *swell* acquaintance occasioned no surprise to old Simon Carr, the bottle-nosed landlord of the Falstaff, who was a man of discernment in his way, and knew a thing or two. Despite such striking evidences to the contrary, the Magus was perfectly at his ease, and sacrificing as usual to the god of flame. His mithra, or pipe, the symbol of his faith, was zealously placed between his lips, and never did his Chaldean, Bactrian, Persian, Pamphilian, Proconnesian, or Babylonian namesake, which ever of the six was the true Zoroaster (*vide* Bayle), respire more fervently at the altar of fire, than our Magus at the end of his enkindled tube. In his creed we believe he was a Dualist, and

believed in the co-existence, and mystical relation of the principles of good and ill—his pipe being his Yezdan, or benign influence; his empty pouch his Ahreman, or the devil. But we shall not pause to examine his tenets—we meddle with no man's religious opinions, an shall leave the Magus to the enjoyment of his own sentiments, be they what they may.

One guest alone remains, and him we shall briefly dismiss. The reader, we imagine, will scarcely need to be told who was the owner of those keen, gray eyes—those exuberant red whiskers—that airy azure frock! It was

> Our brave co-partner of the Roads,
> Skilful surveyor of highways and hedges;

in a word—Dick Turpin!

Dick had been called upon to act as president of the board, and an excellent president he made, sedulously devoting himself to the due administration of the punch bowl. Not a rummer was allowed to stand empty for an instant. Toast, sentiment, and anacreontic

song, succeeded each other at speedy intervals; but there was no speechifying—no politics. He left church and state to take care of themselves. Whatever his politics might be, Dick never allowed them to interfere with his pleasures. His maxim was to make the most of the passing moment; the *dum vivimus vivamus* was never out of his mind; a precautionary measure which we recommend to the adoption of all gentlemen of the like, or any other precarious profession.

Notwithstanding all Dick's efforts to promote conviviality, seconded by the excellence of the beverage itself, conversation somehow or other began to flag; from being general it became particular. Tom King, who was no punch-bibber, especially at that time of day, fell into a deep reverie—your gamesters often do so—while the Magus, who had smoked himself drowsy, was composing himself to a doze. Turpin seized this opportunity of addressing a few words on matters of business to Jerry Juniper, or, as he now chose to be called, Count Conyers.

"My dear Count," said Dick, in a low and

confidential tone, "you are aware that my errand to town is accomplished—I have *smashed* Lawyer Coates's *screen*—pocketed the *dimmock* (here 'tis," continued he, parenthetically slapping his pockets), "and done t'other trick in prime twig for Tom King. With a cool thousand in hand, I might, if I chose, rest awhile on my oars; but a quiet life don't suit me. I must be moving. So I shall start to Yorkshire to-night."

"Indeed," said the *soi-disant* Count, in a languid tone—"so soon?"

"I have nothing to detain me," replied Dick "And, to tell you the truth, I want to see how matters stand with Sir Luke Rookwood. I should be sorry if he went to the wall for want of any assistance I can render him."

"True," returned the Count, "one would regret such an occurrence certainly—but I fear your assistance may arrive a little too late. He is pretty well done up, I should imagine, by this time."

"That remains to be seen," said Turpin.

"His case is a bad one to be sure—d——d bad—but I trust not utterly hopeless. With all his impetuosity and pride, I like the fellow, and will help him if I can. It will be a difficult game to set him on his legs, but I think it may be done. That underground marriage was sheer madness, and turned out as ill as such a scheme might have been expected to do. Poor Sybil! if I could pipe an eye for any thing, it should be for her.—I wouldn't have her death at my door for a trifle—but that's neither here nor there. It was her own act, and no one is answerable for it in any court below stairs, whatever they may be at that above. I don't know how it is, Jerry; I'm not much given to thinking of those things, but that girl's looks have been running in my noddle ever since I saw her by torchlight at the altar, just before her death. I never saw any thing that moved me so much. I can't get her out of my head.—Give me a pinch of snuff. Such thoughts unman one. As to the priest, that's a totally different affair. If he strangled his daughter, old Alan did

right to take the law into his own hands, and squeeze his throttle for him.—I'd have done the same thing myself; and, being a proscribed Jesuit, returned, as I understand, without the King's licence for so doing, why father Checkley's murder (if it must be so called, I can't abide hard terms) won't lie very heavy at Alan's door. That, however, has nothing to do with Sir Luke. He was neither accessory nor principal. Still he will be in danger, at least from Lady Rookwood's machinations. The whole county of York, I make no doubt, is up in arms by this time."

"Then why venture thither?" said the Count, somewhat ironically, "for my part, I've a strange fancy for keeping out of harm's way as long as possible."

"Every man to his taste," returned Turpin—"I like a row. My craft sails tautest when the breeze is brisk; for then there is always most to be picked up. I love to confront danger. Run away! pshaw! always meet your foe half way."

"True," replied the Count, "*half way!*—but

you go the whole distance. What prudent man would beard the lion in his den?"

"I never was a prudent man," rejoined Dick, smiling—"I have no superfluous caution about me. Come what will, I shall try to find out this Luke Rookwood, and offer him my purse, such as it is, and it is now better lined than usual; a hand free to act as he lists, and a head, which imprudent though it be, can often think better for others than for its own master."

"Vastly fine!" exclaimed the Count, with an ill-disguised sneer—"but I hope you don't forget that the marriage certificate, which you hold, is perfectly valueless now. The estates, you are aware——"

"Are no longer Sir Luke's—I see what you are driving at, Count," returned Dick coldly.—"But he will need it, to establish his claim to the *title*—and he shall have it.—While he was Sir Luke with £.10,000 a-year, I drove a hard bargain, and would have stood out for the last stiver I demanded; but now that he is one of

'*us*,' a simple *Chevalier d'Industrie*, he shall have it, and welcome."

"Perhaps Lady Rookwood, or Mrs. Mowbray, might be inclined to treat," maliciously insinuated the Count; "the title may be worth something to Ranulph."

"It is worth more to Luke; and if it were *not*—he gets it. Are you satisfied?"

"Perfectly," replied the Count, with affected *bonhommie*—"and I will now let you into a secret respecting Miss Mowbray, from which you may gather something for your guidance in this matter; and if the word of woman be at all to be trusted, though individually I cannot say that I have much faith in it, Sir Luke's planetary hour is not yet completely overcast."

"That's exactly what I wish to know, my dear fellow," said Turpin, eagerly.—"You have already told me that you were witness to a singular interview between Miss Mowbray and Sir Luke, after my departure from the Priory. If I mistook you not, the whole business will hinge upon that. What occurred? Let me

have every particular? The whole history and mystery."

"You shall with pleasure," said the Count—"and I hope it may tend to your benefit; as I have just observed, the fabric rests on a sandy foundation. But, before I begin, I must clear my whistle, for it's a long tale. Here's to their speedy union, ha—ha! though an old catch that I've heard, says,—

'No mate ever brook would,
A rook of the Rookwood.'

I wonder how it will turn out in Sir Luke's case."

"Poh—poh," cried Dick, impatiently—"the interview—the interview."

"Well," said the Count, "You shall have it without more delay. After I had quitted the scene of action at the Priory, and at your desire left the Rookwood party masters of the field, I fled with the rest of the crew towards the rocks. There we held council of war for a short time. Some were for returning to the

fight; but this was negatived entirely, and in the end it was agreed that those who had wives, daughters, and sisters, should join them as speedily as possible at their retreat in the grange; but as I happened to have none of these attractive ties, and had only a troublesome mistress, who I thought could take care of herself, I did not care to follow them, but struck deeper into the wood, and made my way, guided by destiny, I suppose, towards the cave."

"The cave!" cried Dick, rubbing his hands—"I delight in a cave. Tom King and I once had a cave of our own at Epping, and I'll have another, one of these fine days—a cave is as proper to a high Tobyman as a castle to a Baron; but go on."

"The cave I speak of," continued the Count, "was seldom used, except upon great emergencies, by any of the Stop Hole Abbey crew. It was a sort of retiring den of our old lioness Barbara, and, like all belonging to her, respected by her dupes;" however, the cave is a good cave

for all that—is well concealed by brushwood, and comfortably lighted from a crevice in the rock above; it lies near the brink of the stream, amongst the woods, just above the waterfall, and is somewhat difficult of approach."

"I know something of the situation," said Turpin.

"Well," returned the Count; "not to lose time, into this den I crept, and, expecting to find it vacant, you may imagine my surprise on discovering that it was already occupied, and that Sir Luke Rookwood, his grand-dad, Miss Mowbray, and worst of all, the very person I wished most to avoid, my old flame Handassah, constituted the party."

"A disagreeable *rencontre*, truly," said Turpin.

"Fortunately, they did not perceive my entrance," continued Jerry; "and I took especial care not to introduce myself. Retreat, however, was for the moment impracticable, and I was compelled to be a listener. I cannot te what had passed between the parties before my

arrival, but I heard Miss Mowbray implore Sir Luke to conduct her to her mother. He seemed half inclined to comply with her piteous entreaties; but old Alan shook his head. It was then Handassah put in a word; the minx was ever ready at that. 'Fear not,' said she, 'that she will wed Sir Ranulph. Deliver her to her friends, I beseech you, Sir Luke, and woo her honourably. She will accept you.' Sir Luke stared incredulously, and grim old Alan smiled. 'She has sworn to be your's,' continued Handassah; 'sworn it by every hope of heaven, and the oath has been sealed by blood—by Sybil's blood.'—'Speaks she true?' asked Sir Luke, trembling with agitation. Miss Mowbray answered not. 'You will not deny it, lady,' said Handassah. 'I heard that oath proposed—I heard it uttered—I saw it registered. You cannot—you will not—dare not deny it.' 'I do not,' replied Miss Mowbray, with much anguish of manner; 'if he claim me, I am his.' 'And he will claim thee,' said Alan Rookwood, triumphantly. 'He has thy oath, no matter

how extorted—thou must fulfil thy vow.'—'I am prepared to do so,' said Eleanor. 'But if you would not utterly destroy me, let this maid conduct me to my mother—to my friends.' 'To Ranulph?' asked Sir Luke, bitterly. 'No, no,' returned Miss Mowbray, in accents of deepest despair—'to my mother—I wish not to behold him again.'—'Be it so,' cried Sir Luke; 'but remember, in love or hate, thou art mine; I shall claim the fulfilment of thy oath. Farewell. Handassah will lead thee to thy mother.' Miss Mowbray bowed her head, but returned no answer, while, followed by old Alan, Sir Luke departed from the cavern."

"Whither went they?" demanded Turpin?

"That I know not," replied Jerry. "I was about to follow, when I was prevented."

"How?" asked Dick. "By the abrupt entrance of another party. Scarcely, I think could the two Rookwoods have made good their retreat, when shouts were heard without, and young Ranulph and Major Mowbray forced their way, sword in hand, into the cave. Here

was a situation—for *me* I mean—to the young lady, I make no doubt, it was pleasant enough—but my neck was in jeopardy. However, you know that I am not deficient in strength, and, upon the present occasion, I made the best use of the agility with which boon nature has endowed me. Amidst the joyous confusion—the sobbings, and embracings, and congratulations that ensued, I contrived, like a wild cat, to climb the rocky sides of the cave, and concealed myself behind a jutting fragment of stone. It was well I did so, for scarcely was I hidden, when in came old Barbara, followed by Mrs. Mowbray, and a dozen others."

"Barbara!" ejaculated Dick. "Was she a prisoner?"

"A prisoner!" repeated Jerry, smiling significantly. "No, the old hell cat is too deep for that. She had *nosed upon* Sir Luke, and hoped they would *grab* him and his grand-dad. But the birds were flown."

"I'm glad she was baulked," said Dick. "Was any search made after them?"

"Can't say," replied Jerry. "I could only indistinctly catch the sounds of their voices from my lofty hiding place. Before they left the cavern, I made out that Mrs. Mowbray resolved to go to Rookwood, and to take her daughter thither, a proceeding to which the latter strongly objected."

"To Rookwood," said Dick, musingly. "Will she keep her oath, I wonder?"

"That's more than I can say," said Jerry, sipping his punch. "'Tis a deceitful sex."

"A deceitful sex, indeed," echoed Dick, tossing off a tumbler; "for one Sybil we meet with twenty Handassahs, eh, Count."

"Twenty—a hundred to one," replied Jerry. "'Tis a vile sex!"

CHAPTER II.

Grimm. How gloriously the sun sets to-night.

Moor. When I was a boy, my favourite thought was, that I should live and die like yonder glorious orb. It was a boyish thought.

Grimm. True, Captain.

THE ROBBERS.

"PEACE, base calumniators," exclaimed Tom King, aroused from his toothpick reverie by these aspersions of the best part of creation. "Peace, I say. None shall dare to abuse that dear devoted sex in the hearing of her champion, without pricking a lance with me in her behalf. What do you, either of you, who abuse woman in that wholesale style, know of her? Nothing—less than nothing; and yet you venture, upon your paltry experience, to lift up your voices and decry the sex. Now, I *do* know her—and upon my own experience, I avouch, that as a

sex, woman, compared with man, is as an angel to a devil. As a sex, woman is faithful—loving—self-sacrificing. *We* 'tis that make her otherwise; *we*, selfish, exacting, neglectful men; we teach her indifference, and then blame her apt scholarship. We spoil our own hand, and then blame the cards. No abuse of women in my hearing. Give me a glass of grog, Dick—the sex—three times three; and here's a song for you into the bargain." Saying which, in a mellow plaintive tone, Tom gave the following:—

PLEDGE OF THE HIGHWAYMAN.

Come fill up a bumper to Eve's fairest daughters,
Who have lavished their smiles on the brave and the free;
Toast the sweethearts of Dudley, Hind, Wilmot, and Waters*,
Whate'er their attractions, whate'er their degree.
Pledge—pledge in a bumper, each kind-hearted maiden,
Whose bright eyes were dimmed at the Highwayman's fall—
Who stood by the gallows with sorrow o'erladen,
Bemoaning the fate of the gallant Du Val†.

* Four celebrated highwaymen, all rejoicing in the honourable distinction of Captain.

† Of this gay and chivalrous robber, his flageolet and *couranto*, his *bonnes fortunes*, his masked visitants, his gorgeous funeral, and the crowd of damsels who bewailed his loss, we

Here's to each pretty lass chance of war bringeth near one,
Whom, with manner empassioned, we tenderly stop;
And to whom, like the lover addressing his dear one,
In terms of entreaty, *the question* we pop.
How oft in such case rosy lips have proved sweeter
Than the rosiest book—bright eyes saved a bright ring,
While that *one other* kiss has bought off a *repeater;*
And a bead as a *favour*—the *favourite* string.

With our hearts ready rifled, each pocket we rifle,
With the pure flame of chivalry stirring our breasts;
Life's risk for our *mistress's praise* is a trifle;
And each purse is a *trophy* our *homage* attests.
Then toss off your glasses to all girls of spirit,
Ne'er with names, or with number, your memories vex;
Our toast, boys, embraces each woman of merit,
And for fear of omission we'll toast the WHOLE SEX!

have spoken at some length in our first volume; but they who desire to hear more of him will do well, if they are not already acquainted with it, to turn to a delightful essay on the subject of *Thieves, Ancient and Modern*, in Mr. Leigh Hunt's Indicator, in which there is a sparkling sketch of the gallant Claude. *Our* only regret is that Mr. Hunt did not expatiate more upon the Highwaymen; but we trust he will repair this error in the *London Journal*, and give us a brilliant page or two on the denizens of the empire of High Toby. *A-propos* of the *London Journal*, let us, even in a hasty note, wish Mr. Hunt all the success in his new undertaking, which he so richly merits; and counsel all our readers who love the cordial, the kindly, the amiable, the poetical, the fanciful, and the *reasonable* in every sense, at once to become subscribers to this pleasantest of pleasant hebdomadabs. He who can turn even "*stones*" to gems must possess a subtle alchemy.

"Well," replied Dick, replenishing King's rummer, while he laughed heartily at his ditty, "I shan't refuse your toast, though my heart don't respond to your sentiments. Ah, Tom! the sex you praise so much, may, I fear, prove your undoing. Do as you please, but curse me if ever I pin my life to a petticoat. I'd as soon think of neglecting the four cautions."

"The four cautions," said King; "what are they?"

"Did you never hear them?" replied Dick. "Attend then, and be edified."

THE FOUR CAUTIONS.

Pay attention to these cautions four,
And through life you will need little more.
Should you dole out your days to three score:
Beware of a pistol before,
Before, before,
Beware of a pistol before.

And when backwards his ears are inclined,
And his tail with his ham is combined,
Caution two you will bear in your mind:
Beware of a prancer behind,
Behind, behind,
Beware of a prancer behind.

Thirdly, when in the park you may ride,
On your best bit of blood, Sir, astride,
Chatting gay to your old friend's young bride,
Beware of a coach at the side,
At the side, at the side,
Beware of a coach at the side.

Lastly, whether in purple or grey,
Canter, ranter, grave, solemn, or gay,
Whate'er he may do or may say,
Beware of a priest every way,
Every way, every way,
Beware of a priest every way.

"Methinks!" exclaimed Jerry, "I have heard something like that before; but there was a trifling variation in the reading of the first stanza."

"Very possibly," returned Dick. "My version is intended for the *Family* Library*."

"Well," said Tom King, "all you can sing or say don't alter my good opinion of the women. Not a secret have I from the girl of my heart.

* This is no anachronism, though it would appear to be one. Turpin alluded to the records of the prigging fraternity! all who live *upon the cross* being included, amongst themselves, in the affectionate designation of "THE FAMILY."

She *could* have sold me over and over again, if she had chosen—but my sweet Sue is not the wench to do that."

"It is not too late," said Dick. "Your Dalilah may yet hand you over to the Philistines."

"Then I shall die in a good cause," said King: "but

> The Tyburn tree
> Has no terrors for me,
> Let better men swing—I'm at liberty.

I shall never come to the scragging post, unless you turn topsman*, Dick Turpin. My nativity has been cast, and the stars have declared that I am to die by the hand of my best friend—and that's you—eh, Dick?"

"It sounds like it," replied Turpin; "but I advise you not to become too intimate with Jack Ketch—he may prove your best friend after all."

"Why faith, that's true," replied King

* Hangman.

laughing; "and if I must ride backwards up Holborn Hill, I'll do the thing in style, and honest Jack shall never want his reg'lars. A man should always die game. We none of us know how soon our turn may come, but come when it will, *I* shall never flinch from it. And now to change the subject. You are off, I understand, to Yorkshire to-night; Dick—'pon my soul you are a wonderful fellow—an *alibi* personified!—here and there and every where at one and the same time—no wonder you are called the flying highwayman. To-day in town—to-morrow at York—the day after at Chester. The devil only knows where you will pitch your quarters a week hence—neither *beak* nor *trap* can have a chance of guessing. There are rumours of you in all counties at the same moment. This man swears you robbed him at Hounslow—that, on Salisbury Plain—while another swears you monopolize Cheshire and Yorkshire, and that it is'nt safe even to *hunt* without pops in your pocket. I heard

some devilish good stories of you at D'Osyndar's t'other day; the fellow who told them to me, little thought that I was a brother blade."

"You flatter me," said Dick, smiling complacently, "but it's no merit of mine. Black Bess alone enables me to do it, and her's be the credit. Talking of being every where at the same time, you shall hear what she once did for me in Cheshire. Meantime a glass to the best mare in England—you won't refuse that toast, Tom. Ah! if your mistress was only as true to you, as my nag to me, you might set at nought the tightest hempen cravat that was ever twisted, and defy your best friend to hurt you—Black Bess! and God bless her. And now for the song." Saying which, with much emotion, he chaunted the following rhymes.

BLACK BESS.

Let the lover his mistress's beauty rehearse,
And laud her attractions in languishing verse;
Be it mine in rude strains, but with *truth* to express,
The love that I bear to my bonny Black Bess.

From the West was her dam, from the East was her sire,
From the one came her swiftness, the other her fire;
No peer of the realm better blood can possess,
Than flows in the veins of my bonny Black Bess.

Look! look! how that eyeball glows bright as a brand!
That neck proudly arches, those nostrils expand!
Mark! that wide-flowing mane! of which each silky tress
Might adorn prouder beauties—though none like Black Bess.

Mark! that skin sleek as velvet, and dusky as night,
With its jet undisfigured by one lock of white;
That throat branched with veins, prompt to charge or caress,
Now is she not beautiful—bonny Black Bess?

Over highway and byeway, in rough and smooth weather,
Some thousands of miles have we journied together;
Our couch the same straw, and our meal the same mess,
No couple more constant than I and Black Bess.

By moonlight, in darkness, by night, or by day,
Her headlong career there is nothing can stay.
She cares not for distance—she knows not distress—
Can you show me a courser to match with Black Bess?

"Egad, I should think not," exclaimed King; "you are as sentimental on the subject of your mare, as I am when I think of my darling Susan — but I beg pardon for my interruption—pray proceed."

"Let me first clear my throat," returned Dick, "and now—to resume—"

Once it happened in Cheshire, near Dunham, I popped
On a horseman alone, whom I speedily stopped;
That I lightened his pockets you'll readily guess—
Quick work makes Dick Turpin when mounted on Bess.

Now it seems the man knew me; "Dick Turpin," said he,
"You shall swing for this job, as you live d'ye see;"
I laughed at his threats and his vows of redress,
I was sure of an *alibi* then with Black Bess.

The road was a hollow, a sunken ravine*,
Overshadowed completely by wood like a screen;
I clambered the bank, and I needs must confess
That one touch of the spur grazed the side of Black Bess.

Brake, brook, meadow, and plough'd field, Bess fleetly bestrode,
As the crow wings her flight, we selected our road,
We arrived at Hough Green in five minutes or less,
My neck, it was saved, by the speed of Black Bess.

* The exact spot where Turpin committed this well-known robbery, and which has often been pointed out to us, lies in what is now a woody hollow, though once the old road from Altringham to Knutsford, skirting the rich and sylvan domains of Dunham, and descending the hill which brings you to the bridge crossing the river Bollin. With some little difficulty we penetrated this ravine; it is just the locality for such an adventure. A small brook wells through it, and the steep banks are overhung with every description of timber, and were, the other day, a perfect nest of primroses and wild flowers. Hough (pronounced Hoo) Green lies, we believe, at about three miles distance across the country—the way Turpin rode. The old Bowling green is one of the pleasantest inns in Cheshire.

Stepping carelessly forward, I lounge on the green,
Taking excellent care that by all I am seen,
Some remarks on time's flight, to the squires I address,
But I say not a word of the flight of Black Bess;

I mention the hour—it was just about four—
Play a rubber at bowls—think the danger is o'er,
When athwart my next game, like a checkmate at chess,
Comes the horseman in search of the rider of Bess.

What matter details? Off with triumph I came,
He swears to the hour—and the squires swear the same,
I had robbed him at *four*—while at four *they* profess
I was quietly bowling—all thanks to Black Bess.

Then one halloo, boys—one loud cheering halloo—
To the swiftest of coursers—the gallant, the true;
For the sportsman unborn, shall the memory bless,
Of the horse of the highwayman, bonny Black Bess!

Loud acclamations rewarded Dick's performance. Awakened from his doze, Zoroaster beat *time* to the melody, the only thing, Jerry said, he was capable of *beating* in his present shattered condition. After some little persuasion, the Magus was prevailed upon to enliven the company with a strain, which he trolled forth after a maudlin manner: it was as follows—

THE DOUBLE CROSS.

Though all of us have heard of *crost* fights,
And certain *gains*, by certain *lost* fights;
I rather fancies that it's news,
How in a mill, *both* men should *lose*,
For vere the *odds* are thus made *even*,
It plays the dickens with the *steven* * ;
Besides, against all rule they're sinning,
Vere *neither* has *no* chance of vinning.
Ri—tol—lol—&c.

Two *milling coves*, each vide avake,
Vere backed to fight for heavy stake;
But in the meantime, so it vos,
Both *kids* agreed to *play a cross* ;
Bold came each *buffer* † to the *scratch*,
To make it look a *tightish match* ;
They *peeled* ‡ in style—and bets vere making,
Twas six to four—but few were *taking*.
Ri—tol—lol—&c.

Quite cautiously the mill began,
For neither knew the other's plan;
Each *cull* § completely *in the dark*,
Of vot might be his neighbour's *mark* ;
Resolved his *fibbing* || not to mind,
Nor yet to *pay him back in kind* ;
So on each other *kept they tout* ¶,
And *sparred* a bit, and *dodged* about.
Ri—tol—lol—&c.

* Money. † Man. ‡ Stripped. § Fellow.
|| A particular kind of pugilistic punishment.
¶ Kept each an eye upon the other.

Vith *mawleys* * raised, Tom bent his back,
As if to *plant* a heavy thwack,
Vile Jem with neat left-handed *stopper*,
Straight threatened Tommy with a *topper*;
'Tis all my eye! no *claret* flows,
No *facers* sound—no smashing blows—
Five minutes pass—yet not a *hit*,
How can it end, palls? vait a bit?
Ri—tol—lol—&c.

Each cove vos *teazed* with double duty,
To please his backers, yet *play booty* †;
Ven luckily for Jem a *teller*
Vos planted right upon his *smeller*;
Down dropped he stunned—ven time was called,
Seconds in vain the *seconds* bawled—
The *mill* is o'er—the crosser *crost*,
The loser's *von*, the vinner *lost*.
Ri—tol—lol—&c.

The party assumed once more a lively air, and the glass was circulated so freely, that at last a final charge drained the ample bowl of its contents.

"The best of friends must part," said Dick, "and willingly would I order another whiff of punch, but that I think we have all had *enough to satisfy us*, as you milling coves have it, Zory!—Your one eye has got a drop in it already,

* Hands. † Deceive them.

old fellow—and to speak the truth, I must be getting into the saddle without more delay, for I have a long ride before me. And now friend Jerry, before I start, suppose you tip us one of your merry staves; we haven't heard your pipe to-day, and never a cross cove of us all, be he high or low toby, cracksman, spicegloak, or sneak, can throw off so rum a chaunt as yourself. A song, a song."

"Ay, a song," reiterated King and the Magus.

"You do me too much honour, gemmen," said Jerry modestly, taking a pinch of snuff; "I am sure I shall be most happy—my chaunts are all of a sort—you must make all due allowances —hem!" and clearing his throat, he forthwith warbled

THE MODERN GREEK.

(*Not* translated from the Romaic.)

Come gemmen name, and make your game,
See round the ball is spinning.
Black, red, or blue, the colours view,
Une, deux, cinque, 'tis beginning.
Then make your game,
The colour name,
While round the ball is spinning.

This sleight of hand my *flat* shall *land*
While *covered* by my *bonnet**.
I *plant* my ball, and boldly call,
Come make your game upon it.
Thus rat-a-tat,
I land my flat,
'Tis black—not red—is winning.

At gay *roulette* was never met
A lance like mine for *bleeding;*
I'm ne'er *at fault,* at nothing halt,
All other *legs* preceding.
To all awake,
I never stake
A *mag* †, unless I nip it.

Blind-hookey sees how well I squeeze,
The *well-packed* cards in shuffling;
Ecarté—whist—I never missed
A nick the *broads* ‡ while ruffling.
Mogul or loo,
The same I do.
I'm down to trumps as trippet.

French Hazard ta'en, *I nick the main,*
Was ne'er so prime a *caster.*
No *crabs* for me, I'm fly d'ye see,
The bank shall change its master.
Seven, *quatre, trois*—
The stakes are high,
Ten *mains*—ten *mains* are mine, pals.

* Accomplice.

† A farthing. ‡ Cards.

At *Rouge et Noir*, yon *hellite* * choir,
I'll make no bones of stripping,
One glorious *coup* for me shall *do*,
While they may deal each *pip* in.
Trente-un-après,
Ne'er clogs my way,
The game—the game's divine, pals.

At Billiards set, I make my bet,
I'll *score* and win the *rub*, pals;
I miss my *cue*, my *hazard* too,
But yet my foe I'll drub, pals.
That *cannon-twist*,
I ne'er had missed,
Unless to suit my views, pals.

To make all right, the match look *tight*,
This trick you know is done, pals;
But now be gay, I'll *show* my play,
Hurrah! the game is won, pals.
No hand so fine,
No wrist like mine,
No odds I e'er refuse, pals.

Then choose your game, whate'er you name,
To me alike all offers;
Chick-hazard, whist, whate'er you list,
Replenish quick your coffers.
Thus rat-a-tat,
I land my flat,
To every purse I *speak*, pals.

* Qy. *elite*.—PRINTER'S DEVIL.

Cramped boxes 'ware—all's right and fair.
Barred balls I *bar* when goaded.
The deuce an ace is out of place,
The deuce a die is loaded.
Then make your game,
Your colour name.
Success attend the *Greek*, pals.

"Bravo, Jerry—bravissimo!" chorused the party.

"And now, pals, farewell!—a long farewell!" said Dick, in a tone of theatrical valediction. "As I said before, the best friends must separate. We may soon meet again, or we now may part for ever. We cannot command our luck; but we can make the best of the span allotted to us. You have your game to play—I have mine: may each of us meet with the success he deserves."

"Egad I hope not," said King; "I'm afraid in that case the chances would be against us."

"Well then, the success we anticipate, if you like it better," rejoined Dick. "I have only to observe one thing more, namely, that I must insist upon standing Squire upon the present occasion. Not a word—I won't hear a syllable.

Landlord, I say—what ho!" continued Dick, stepping out of the arbour, "here, my old Admiral of the White, what's the reckoning—what's to pay, I say?"

"Let ye know directly, Sir," said mine host of the Falstaff.

"Order my horse—the black mare," added Dick.

"And mine," said King, "the sorrel colt. I'll ride with you a mile or two on the road, Dick, perhaps we may stumble upon something."

"Very likely."

"We meet at twelve, at D'Osyndar's, Jerry," said King, "if nothing happens."

"Agreed," said Jerry.

"What say you to a rubber at bowls in the meantime?" said the Magus, taking his pipe from his lips.

Jerry nodded acquiescence; and while they went in search of the implements of the game, Turpin and King sauntered gently on the green.

It was a delicious evening. The sun was slowly declining, and glowed like a ball of fire

amid the thick foliage of a neighbouring elm. Whether, like the robber Moor, Tom King was touched by this glorious sunset, we pretend not to determine, but certain it was, that a shade of inexpressible melancholy passed across his handsome countenance, as he gazed in the direction of Harrow-on-the-Hill, which lying to the west of the green upon which they walked, stood out with its pointed spire and lofty college, against the ruddy sky. He spoke not—but Dick noticed the passing emotion.

"What ails you, Tom?" said he, with much kindness of manner, "are you not well, lad?"

"Yes, I am well enough," said King; "I know not what came over me, but looking at Harrow, I thought of my school days, and what I was *then*, and that bright prospect reminded me of my boyish hopes."

"Tut—tut," said Dick, "this is idle—you are a man now."

"I know I am," replied Tom, "but I *have* been a boy. Had I any faith in presentiments,

I should say this is the last sunset I shall ever see."

"Here comes our host," said Dick, smiling. "I've no presentiment that that is the last bill I shall ever pay."

The bill was brought, and settled. As Turpin paid it, the man's conduct altogether was singular, and awakened Turpin's suspicions.

"Are our horses ready?" asked Dick, quickly.

"They are, Sir," said the landlord.

"Let us begone," whispered Dick to King, "I don't like this fellow's manner. I thought I heard a carriage draw up at the inn door just now—there may be danger. Be fly," added he to Jerry and the Magus. "Now, Sir," said he to the landlord, "lead the way. Keep on the alert, Tom." Dick's hint was not lost upon the two bowlers. They watched their comrades; and listened intently for any manifestation of alarm.

CHAPTER III.

Was this well done, Jenny?
CAPTAIN MACHEATH.

WHILE Turpin and King are walking across the bowling-green, we shall see what has been passing outside the inn. Tom's presentiments of danger were not, it appeared, without foundation. Scarcely had the ostler brought forth our two Highwaymen's steeds, when a post chaise, escorted by two or three horsemen, drove furiously up to the door. The sole occupant of the carriage was a lady, whose slight and pretty figure was all that could be distinguished of her, her face being closely veiled. The landlord, who was busied in casting up Turpin's account, rushed forth at the summons. A word or two passed between him and the horsemen, upon

which the former's countenance fell. He posted in the direction of the garden; and the horsemen instantly dismounted.

"We have him now, sure enough," said one of them, a very small man, who looked, in his boots, like Buckle equipped for the Oaks.

"By the powers, I begin to think so," replied the other horseman; "but don't spile all, Mr. Coates, by being too precipitate."

"Never fear that, Titus," said Coates, for it was the gallant Attorney, "he's sure to come for his mare. That's a *trap* certain to catch him, eh, Mr. Paterson. With the Chief Constable of Westminster to back us, the devil's in it if we are not a match for him."

"And for Tom King too," replied the Chief Constable, "since his woman's peached, the game's up with him too. We've long had an eye upon him, and now we'll have a finger. He's one of your dashing trouts that we always give a long line to, but we'll *land* him this time anyhow. If you'll look after Dick Turpin, gemmen, I'll make sure of Tom."

I'd rather you would have helped *us*, Mr. Paterson," said Coates ; " never mind Tom King, another time will do for him."

" No such thing," said Paterson, " one *weighs* just as much for that matter as t'other. I'll take Tom to myself, and surely you two, with the landlord and ostler, can manage Turpin amongst you."

" I don't know that," said Coates, doubtfully, " he's a devil of a fellow to deal with."

" Take him quietly," said Paterson.—" Draw the chaise out of the way, lad. Take our tits to one side, and place their nags near the door, ostler. Shall you be able to see him, ma'am, where you are?" asked the Chief Constable, walking to the carriage, and touching his hat to the lady within ; and having received a satisfactory nod from the bonnet and veil, returned to his companions. " And now, gemmen," added he, " let's step aside a little. Don't use your fire-arms too soon."

As if conscious what was passing around her, and of the danger that awaited her master, Black Bess exhibited so much impatience, and

plunged so violently, that it was with difficulty the ostler could hold her. "The devil's in the mare," said he; "what's the matter with her; she was quiet enough a few minutes since. So, ho! lass—stand."

Turpin and King meanwhile, walked quic through the house, preceded by the host, v conducted them, not without some inward f and trembling, towards the door. Arrived th each man rushed swiftly to his horse. D was in the saddle in an instant, and stamping foot upon the ostler's leg, Black Bess compel the man, yelling with pain, to quit his hold of bridle. Tom King was not equally fortuna Before he could mount his horse, a loud sh was raised, which startled the animal, and caus him to swerve, so that Tom lost his footing in t stirrup, and fell to the ground. He was instantly seized by Paterson, and a struggle commenced, King endeavouring, but in vain, to draw a pistol.

"Flip him*, Dick—fire, or I'm taken," cried

* Shoot him.

King. "Fire, damn you—why don't you fire?" shouted he in desperation, still struggling vehemently with Paterson, who was a strong man, and more than a match for such a light weight as King.

"I can't," cried Dick;—"I shall hit you, if I fire."

"Take your chance," shouted King—"Is *this* your friendship?"

Thus urged, Turpin fired. The ball ripped up the sleeve of Paterson's coat, but did not wound him.

"Again!" cried King—"d—n your blood, Dick, why don't you hear me? Fire again."

Pressed as he was by foes on every side, himself their mark, for both Coates and Tyrconnel had fired upon him, and were now mounting their steeds to give chase, it was impossible that Turpin could take sure aim; add to which, in the struggle, Paterson and King were each moment changing their relative positions. He, however, would no longer hesitate, but again, at his friend's request, fired. The ball lodged itself

in King's breast! He fell at once. At this instant a shriek was heard from the chaise: the window was thrown open, and her thick veil being drawn aside, the features of a very pretty female, now impressed with terror and contrition, were suddenly exhibited.

King fixed his glazing eyes upon her.

"Susan!" sighed he, "Is it you, that I behold?"

"Yes—yes 'tis she, sure enough," said Paterson.—"You see, ma'am, what you and such like have brought him to. However, you'll lose your reward; for he's going fast enough."

"Reward!" gasped King, "reward! did she betray me?"

"Ay, ay, Sir"—said Paterson, "she blowed the gaff, if it's any consolation to you to know it."

"Consolation!" repeated the dying man—perfidious—oh—the prophecy—my best friend—Turpin—I die by his hand." And vainly striving to raise himself, he fell backwards and expired. Alas! poor Tom!

"Mr. Paterson—Mr. Paterson," cried Coates, "leave the landlord to look after the body of that

dying ruffian, and mount with us in pursuit of the living rascal. Come, Sir—quick—mount—dispatch.—You see he is yonder—he seems to hesitate—we shall have him now."

"Well, gemmen—I'm ready," said Paterson, "but how the devil came you to let him escape you?"

"St. Patrick only knows!" said Titus; "he's as slippery as an eel—and, like a cat, turn him which way you will, he is always sure to alight upon his legs. I shouldn't wonder but we lose him now, after all, though he has such a small start; that mare flies like the wind."

"He shall have a tight run for it, at all events," said Paterson, putting spurs into his horse. "I've a good nag under me, and you are neither of you badly mounted—he is only three hundred yards before us, and the devil's in it if we can't run him down. It's a three hundred pound job, Mr. Coates, and well worth a race."

"You shall have another hundred from me, Sir, if you take him," said Coates, urging his steed forward.

"Thank you, Sir, thank you—follow my directions, and we'll make sure of him," said the Constable. "Gently—gently—not so fast up the hill—you see he's breathing his horse—all in good time, Mr. Coates—all in good time, Sir."

And maintaining an equal distance, both parties cantered leisurely up, what we believe is now called the Windmill Hill. We shall now return to Turpin.

Aghast at the deed he had accidentally committed, Dick remained for a few moments irresolute; he perceived that King was mortally wounded, and that all attempts at rescue would be fruitless; he perceived, likewise, that Jerry and the Magus had effected their escape from the bowling green, as he could detect their figures stealing along the hedge-side. He hesitated no longer. *Sauve qui peut* was the order of the day. He turned his horse, and galloped slowly off, little heeding the pursuit with which he was threatened.

"Every bullet has its billet," said Dick; "but little did I think that I really should

turn poor Tom's executioner. To the devil with this rascally snapper," cried he, throwing the pistol over the hedge. "I could never have used it again. 'Tis strange too that he should have foretold his own fate—devilish strange; and then that he should have been betrayed by the very blowen he trusted! that's a lesson, if I wanted any—but trust a woman—not I, the length of my little finger."

Arrived at the brow of the hill, whence such a beautiful view of the country surrounding the Metropolis is obtained, Turpin turned for an instant to reconnoitre his pursuers. Coates and Titus, he utterly disregarded; but Paterson was a more formidable foe, and he well knew that he had to deal with a man of experience and resolution. It was then, for the first time, that the thoughts of executing his extraordinary ride to York, first flashed across him—his bosom throbbed high with rapture, and he involuntarily exclaimed aloud, as he raised himself in the saddle, "By ——— I will do it!"

He took one last look at the great Babel that lay buried in a world of trees beneath him, and as his quick eye ranged over the magnificent prospect lit up by that gorgeous sunset, he could not help thinking of Tom King's last words—"Poor fellow!" thought Dick, "he said truly—he should never see another sunset!" Aroused by the approaching clatter of his pursuers but little behind him, Dick struck into a lane which lies on the right of the road, now called Shoot-up-hill Lane, and set off at a good pace in the direction of Hampstead.

"Now," cried Paterson, "put your tits to it, my boys—we must not lose sight of him for a second in these lanes."

And accordingly, as Turpin was by no means desirous of inconveniencing his mare in this early stage of the business, and as the ground was still upon an ascent, the parties still preserved their relative distances.

At length, after various twistings and turnings in that deep and devious lane, after scaring one or two farmers, and riding over a brood or

two of ducks, dipping into the verdant valley of West End, and ascending another hill, Turpin burst upon the gorsy, sandy, and beautiful Heath of Hampstead; still shaping his course to the left, Dick made for the lower part of the heath, and skirted a path which leads towards North-End, passing the furze-crowned summit, which is at present crested by a clump of lofty pines.

It was here that the chase first assumed a character of interest. Being open ground, the pursued and pursuers were in full view of each other, and as Dick rode swiftly across the heath, with the shouting trio hard at his heels, the scene had a very animated appearance. He crossed the hill — the Hendon Road — passed Crackskull Common—and dashed along the cross-road to Highgate.

Hitherto, no advantage had been gained by the pursuers—they had not lost ground, but still they had not gained an inch, and much spurring was required to maintain their position. But, as they approached Highgate, Dick slack-

ened his pace; and the other party redoubled their efforts. To avoid the town, Dick struck into a narrow path at the right, and rode easily down the hill.

His pursuers were now within a hundred yards, and shouted to him to stand. Pointing to a gate, which seemed to bar their farther progress, Dick unhesitatingly charged it, clearing it in beautiful style. Not so with Coates's party—and the time they lost in unfastening the gate, which none of them liked to leap, enabled Dick to put additional space betwixt them. It did not, however, appear to be his intention altogether to outstrip his pursuers; the chase seemed to give him excitement, which he was willing to prolong, as much as was consistent with his safety. Scudding rapidly past Highgate, like a swift-sailing schooner, with three lumbering Indiamen in her wake, Dick now took the lead along a narrow lane, that threads the fields in the direction of Hornsey. The shouts of his followers had brought others to join them, and as he

neared Crouch End, traversing the lane which takes its name from Du Val, and in which a house frequented by him, stands, or stood, "A highwayman—a highwayman," rang in his ears, in a discordant chorus of many voices.

The whole neighbourhood was alarmed by the cries, and by the tramp of horses—the men of Hornsey rushed into the road to seize the fugitive—and women held up their babes to catch a glimpse of the flying cavalcade, which seemed to gain number and animation as it advanced. Suddenly three horsemen appear in the road—they hear the uproar and the din. "A highwayman—a highwayman!" cry the voices, "stop him, stop him!" But it is no such easy matter. With a pistol in each hand, and his bridle in his teeth, did Turpin boldly pass on. His fierce looks—his furious steed—the impetus with which he pressed forward, bore down all before him. The horsemen gave way, and only served to swell the list of his pursuers.

"We have him now—we have him now!"

cried Paterson, exultingly. "Shout for your lives—the turnpike man will hear us—shout again—again—the fellow has heard it—the gate is shut; we have him—ha—ha!"

The old Hornsey toll bar was a high gate, with *cheveux de frize* in the upper rail—it may be so still. The gate was swung into its lock, and like a tiger in his lair was the prompt custodian of the turnpike trusts ensconced within his doorway, and ready to spring forth upon the runaway. But Dick kept steadily on. He coolly calculated the height of the gate—he looked to the right and to the left; nothing better offered—he spoke a few words of encouragement to Bess—gently patted her neck—then struck spurs into her sides, and cleared the spikes by an inch. Out rushed the amazed turnpike-man, thus unmercifully bilked, and was nearly trampled to death under the feet of Paterson's horse.

"Open the gate, fellow, and be d——d to you," said the chief constable.

"Not I," said theman, sturdily—"unless I gets my dues—I've been done once already; but strike me stupid if I'm done a second time."

"Don't you perceive that's a highwayman? don't you know that I'm chief constable of Westminster?" said Paterson, showing his staff. "How dare you oppose me in the discharge of my duty?"

"That may be or it may not be," said the man, doggedly; "but you don't pass, unless I gets the blunt, and that's the long and short on't."

Amidst a storm of oaths, Coates flung down a crown piece, and the gate was thrown open.

Turpin took advantage of this delay, to breathe his mare; and, striking into a bye lane, at Duckett's green, cantered easily along in the direction of Tottenham. Little repose was however, allowed him. Yelling like a pack of hounds in full cry, his pursuers were again at his heels. He had now to run the gauntlet of the long straggling town of Tottenham, and various were the devices of the populace to entrap him. The whole place was up in arms,

shouting, screaming, running, dancing, and hurling every possible description of missile at the horse and her rider. Dick merrily responded to their clamour, as he flew past, and laughed at the brick bats that were showered thick as hail, and quite as harmlessly around him.

A few more miles' hard riding tired the volunteers, and before the chase reached Edmonton, most of them were "*no where.*" Here, however, fresh relays were gathered, and a strong field again mustered. John Gilpin himself, could not have excited more astonishment amongst the good folks of Edmonton, than did our Highwayman, as he galloped through their town. Unlike the men of Tottenham, the mob received him with acclamations, thinking, no doubt, that, like "the citizen of famous London town," he rode for a wager. Presently, however, borne on the wings of the blast, came the cries of "Turpin, Dick Turpin!" and the hurrahs were changed to hootings; but such was the rate at which our Highwayman rode, that no serious opposition could be offered to

him. A man in a donkey cart, unable to get out of the way, drew himself up in the middle of the road—but Turpin treated him as he had done the *dub* at the *knapping jigger*, and cleared the driver and his little wain with ease. This was a capital stroke, and well adapted to please the multitude, who are ever taken with a brilliant action. "Hark away Dick!" resounded on all hands— while hisses were as liberally bestowed upon his pursuers.

CHAPTER IV.

The Peons are capital horsemen, and several times we saw them at a gallop throw the rein on the horse's neck, take from one pocket a bag of loose tobacco, and with a piece of paper, or a leaf of Indian corn, make a cigar, and then take out a flint and steel and light it.

HEAD'S ROUGH NOTES.

AWAY they fly past scattered cottages, swiftly and skimmingly, like eagles on the wing, along the Enfield highway. All were well mounted, and the horses, now thoroughly warmed, had got into their paces, and did their work beautifully. None of the Coates party had lost ground, but they had maintained it at the expense of their steeds, which were streaming like water carts, whereas Black Bess had scarcely turned a hair.

Turpin, the reader already knows, was a crack rider; he was *the* crack rider of England of his time, and perhaps of any time; he

ought to be classed among "Nimrod's" splendid array of horsemen—and would that it had devolved on that great master of the sporting world, instead of on ourselves, to record his wondrous achievements! How would his nimble pen have galloped fleetly across his pages, carrying the reader along with him in this, as in all his other spirited descriptions! The craft and mystery of jockeyship was not at that time so well understood as it is now-a-days; men treated their horses differently; and few rode then, as well as many ride now, when every youngster takes to the field as naturally as if he had been bred a Guacho. Dick Turpin was a glorious exception to the rule, and anticipated a later age. He rode wonderfully light, yet sat his saddle to perfection; distributing his weight so exquisitely, that his horse scarce felt his pressure; he yielded to every movement made by the animal, and became as it were part and parcel of itself; he took care she should be neither strained nor wrung. Freely, and as lightly as a feather,

was she borne along; beautiful was it to see her action—to watch her style and temper of covering the ground, and many a first-rate Meltonian might have got a wrinkle from Turpin's seat and conduct.

We have before stated that it was not Dick's object to *ride away* from his pursuers; he could have done that at any moment; he liked the fun of the chase, and would have been sorry to put a period to his own excitement. Confident in his mare, he just kept her at such speed as should put his pursuers completely *to it*, without in the slightest degree inconveniencing himself. The reader may judge of the speed at which they went, when we inform him that little better than an hour had elapsed, and nearly twenty miles had been ridden over. "Not bad travelling that," methinks we hear him exclaim.

"By the mother that bore me," said Titus, as they went along in this slapping style;—Titus, by the bye, was on a big, Roman-nosed powerful horse, well adapted to his weight, but which required a plentiful exercise both of leg

and arm, to call forth all his action, and keep his rider alongside his companions—"by the mother that bore me," said he, almost thumping the wind out of his flea-bitten Bucephalus with his calves, after the Irish fashion, "if the fellow isn't lighting his pipe! I saw the sparks fly on each side of him—and there he goes like a smoky chimney on a frosty morning! see he turns his impudent phiz, with the pipe in his mouth! are we to stand that, Mr. Coates?"

"Wait awhile, Sir—wait awhile," said Coates, "we'll smoke *him*, by and bye."

Pœans have been sung in honour of the Peons of the Pampas, by the *Head*long Sir Francis, but what the gallant Major extols so loudly in the South American horsemen, *viz.* the lighting of a cigar when in mid career, was accomplished with equal ease by our English Highwayman, a hundred years ago, nor was it esteemed by him any extravagant feat either. Flint, steel, and tinder, were bestowed within Dick's ample pouch, the short pipe was at hand, and within a few seconds there was a stream of vapour exhaling

from his lips, like the smoke from a steam-boat shooting down the river, and tracking his still rapid course through the air.

"I'll let 'em see what I think of 'em," said Dick coolly, as he turned his head.

It was now gray twilight. The mists of coming night were weaving a thin curtain over the rich surrounding landscape. All the sounds and hum of that delicious hour were heard, broken only by the regular clatter of the horses' hoofs. Tired of shouting, the chasers now kept on their way in deep silence; each man held his breath, and plunged his spurs, rowel deep, into his horse; but the animals were already at the top of their speed, and incapable of greater exertion. Paterson, who was a hard rider, and perhaps a thought better mounted, kept the lead; the rest followed as they might.

Had it been undisturbed by the rush of the cavalcade, the scene would have been still and and soothing. Overhead a cloud of rooks were winging their garrulous flight to the ancestral avenue of an ancient mansion to the right—

the bat was on the wing—the distant lowing of a herd of kine saluted the ear at intervals —the blithe whistle of the rustic herdsman, and the merry chime of waggon bells rang pleasantly from afar.

But these cheerful sounds, which make the still twilight hour delightful, were lost in the tramp of the horsemen, now three abreast. The hind fled to the hedge for shelter; and the waggoner pricked up his ears, and fancied he heard the distant rumbling of an earthquake.

On rush the pack, whipping, spurring, tugging for very life. Again they gave voice, in hopes the waggoner might succeed in stopping the fugitive; but Dick was already by his side. "Harkee, my tulip," cried he, taking the pipe from his mouth as he passed. "Tell my friends, behind, they will hear of me at York."

"What did he say?" asked Paterson.

"That you'll find him at York," said the waggoner.

"At York!" echoed Coates, in amaze.

Turpin was now out of sight, and although

our trio flogged with might and main, they could never catch a glimpse of him until, within a short distance of Ware, they beheld him at the door of a little public-house, standing with his bridle in his hand, coolly quaffing a tankard. No sooner, however, were they in sight, than Dick vaulted into the saddle, and rode off.

"Devil seize you, Sir! why didn't you stop him?" exclaimed Paterson, as he rode up. "My horse is dead lame. I cannot go any farther. Do you know what a prize you have missed? Do you know who that was?"

"No, Sir, I don't," said the publican; "but I know he gave his mare more ale than he took himself, and he has given me a guinea instead of a shilling. He's a regular good un."

"A good un," said Paterson; "it was Turpin, the famous highwayman. We are in pursuit of him. Have you any horses? our cattle are all blown."

"You'll find the post-house in the town, gentlemen. I'm sorry I can't accommodate you; but I keeps no stabling. I wish you a very

good evening, Sir." Saying which, the publican retreated to his domicile.

"That's a flash crib, I'll be bound," said Paterson. "I'll chalk you down, my friend, you may rely upon it. Thus far we're done, Mr. Coates; but curse me if I give it in. I'll follow him to the world's end first."

"Right, Sir—right," said the Attorney. "A very proper spirit, Mr. Constable. You would be guilty of neglecting your duty, were you to act otherwise. We shall have a fine moon in an hour—bright as day—to the post-house—to the post-house."

Accordingly to the post-house they went; and, with as little delay as circumstances admitted, fresh hacks being procured, accompanied by a postillion, the party again pursued their onward course, encouraged to believe they were still in the right scent.

Night had now spread her mantle over the earth; still it was not wholly dark. A few stars were twinkling in the deep, cloudless heavens, and a pearly radiance in the eastern

horizon, heralded the rising of the orb of night. A gentle breeze was stirring—the dews of evening had already fallen—and the air felt bland and dry. It was just the night one would have chosen for a ride, if one ever rode by choice at such an hour; and to Turpin, whose chief excursions were conducted by night, it appeared little less than heavenly.

Full of ardour and excitement, determined to execute what he had mentally undertaken, did Turpin hold on his solitary course. Every thing was favourable to his project; the roads were in admirable condition, his mare was in like order—she was inured to hard work, had rested sufficiently in town to recover from the fatigue of her recent journey, and had never been in more perfect training. "She has now got her wind in her," said Dick—"I'll see what she can do—hark away, lass—hark away! I wish they could see her now," as he felt her almost fly away with him.

Encouraged by her master's voice and hand, Black Bess started forward at a pace which few

horses could have equalled and scarcely any have sustained so long. Even Dick, accustomed as he was to her magnificent action, felt electrified at the speed with which he was borne along. "Bravo—Bravo!" shouted he, "hark away, Bess."

The deep and solemn woods through which they were rushing, rang with his shouts, and the sharp rattle of Bess's hoofs; and thus he held his way, while, in the words of the ballad,

> Fled past, on right and left, how fast,
> Each forest, grove, and bower;
> On right and left, fled past, how fast,
> Each city, town, and tower.

CHAPTER V.

Hurrah—hurrah—avoid the way of the avenging Childe,
His horse is swift as sands that drift—an Arab of the wild.
LOCKHART, SPANISH BALLAD.

BLACK BESS, being undoubtedly the heroine of "book four," our readers will, perhaps, pardon our expatiating a little in this place, upon her birth, parentage, breeding, appearance, and attractions. And first as to her pedigree; for in the horse, unlike the human species, Nature has strongly impressed the noble or ignoble caste; he is the real aristocrat—and the pure blood that flows in the veins of the gallant steed will be infallibly transmitted, if his mate be suitable, throughout all his line. Bess was no *cock tail*—she was thorough bred—

she boasted blood in every bright and branching vein:—

> If blood can give nobility,
> A noble steed was she;
> Her sire was blood, and blood her dam,
> And all her pedigree.

As to her pedigree. Her sire was a desert Arab, renowned in his day, and brought to this country by a wealthy traveller; her dam was an English Racer, coal black as her child. Bess united all the fire and gentleness, the strength and hardihood, the abstinence, and endurance of fatigue of the one, with the spirit, and extraordinary fleetness of the other. How Turpin became possessed of her, is of little consequence. We never heard that he paid a heavy price for her; though we doubt, if any sum would have induced him to part with her. In colour, she was perfectly black, with a skin smooth on the surface as polished jet; not a single white hair could be found in her satin coat. In make she was magnificent. Every point was perfect, beautiful, compact; modelled, in little,

for strength and speed. Arched was her neck, as that of the swan; clean and fine were her lower limbs, as those of the gazelle; round, and sound as a drum was her carcase, and as broad as a cloth-yard shaft her width of chest. Her's were the "*pulchræ clunes, breve caput, arduaque cervix,*" of the Roman bard. There was no redundancy of flesh 'tis true; her flanks might, to please some tastes, have been rounder, and her shoulder fuller; but look at the nerve and sinew, palpable through the veined limbs! She was built more for strength than beauty, and yet she was beautiful. Look at that elegant little head—those thin tapering ears, closely placed together, that broad snorting nostril which seems to snuff the gale with disdain—that eye, glowing and large as the diamond of Giamschid!—Is she not beautiful? Behold her paces! how gracefully she moves! She is off!—no eagle on the wing could skim the air more swiftly.—Is she not magnificent? As to her temper, the lamb is not more gentle. A child might have guided her.

But hark back to Dick Turpin. We left him rattling along in superb style and in the highest possible glee. He could not in fact be otherwise than exhilarated; nothing being so wildly intoxicating as a mad gallop. We seem to start out of ourselves—to be endued, for the time, with new energies—our thoughts take wings rapid as our steed—we feel as if his fleetness and boundless impulses were for the moment our own. We laugh—we exult—we shout for very joy. We cry out with Mephistopheles, but in any thing but a Sardonic mood. "What I enjoy with spirit, is it the less my own on that account? If I can pay for six horses, are not their powers mine—I drive along, and am a proper man, as if I had four-and-twenty legs." These were Turpin's sentiments precisely,—give him four legs and a wide plain, and he needed no Mephistopheles to bid him ride to the devil, as fast as his nag could carry him. Away—away!—the road is level, the path is clear—press on, thou gallant steed, no obstacle is in thy way! —and lo!—the moon breaks forth; her silvery

light is thrown over the woody landscape. Dark shadows are cast athwart the road—and the flying figures of thy rider and thyself are traced, like giant phantoms, in the dust!

Away—away—our breath is gone, in keeping up with this tremendous run—yet Dick Turpin has not lost his wind, for we hear his cheering cry—hark! he sings. The reader will bear in mind that Oliver, means the moon—to whiddle is to blab.

OLIVER WHIDDLES.

Oliver whiddles!—the tatler old!
Telling what best had been left untold;
Oliver ne'er was a friend of mine;
All glims* I hate, that so brightly shine.
Give me a night black as hell—and then
See what I'll show to you, my merry men.

Oliver whiddles!—who cares—who cares
If down upon us he peers and stares?
Mind him who will? with his great white face,
Boldly *I'll* ride by his glim to the chase;
Give him a Rowland, and loudly as ever
Shout, as I show myself, "Stand and deliver!"

"Egad," soliloquized Dick, as he concluded

* Lights.

his song, looking up at the moon, "old Noll's no bad fellow either. I wouldn't be without his white face to-night, for a trifle. He's as good as a lamp to guide one, and let Bess only hold on as she goes now, and I'll do it with ease. Softly, wench—softly—dost not see it's a hill we're rising. The devil's in the mare, she cares for nothing." And as they ascended the hill, Dick's voice once more awoke the echoes of night.

A gang of robbers then,
Myself did entertain,
Notorious Highwaymen
Who did like princes reign.
We'd rob, we'd laugh, we'd joke,
And revel night and day,
But now the knot of us is broke,
'Tis I that leads the way*.

"Poor Will Davies!" sighed Dick.

* From an old ballad in the British Museum, entitled *The Golden Farmer's last Farewell.* Will Davies, the Golden Farmer, was hanged in Fleet Street, in 1690, and afterwards gibbeted on Bagshot Heath, where a public-house bearing his name now stands.

But having run my race
I now at last do see,
In shame and sad disgrace
My life will ended be.

I took delight to rob
And rifle rich and poor,
But now my friend old Mob*
I ne'er shall see thee more.

"And what matters it," exclaimed Dick, "if it were so? Would old Mob regret him? not he—he was a rusty old cove, who cared not a rush for any one but himself. Why not die without whimpering then? But 'pshaw! what am I thinking about? Will Davies never felt in that fashion. He was no faint heart—he was a blade of steel. Well, whatever comes and goes, I suppose one day it will be with me like all the rest of 'em; and, I trust, whenever the chaunter culls† and last speech scribblers get hold

* Old Mob, alias Thomas Simpson, a well-known Highwayman of the time, whose feats are they not chronicled by CHARLES WHITEHEAD, and to be had at the sign of *Taurus*, in Holles Street? Why *en passant*, may we ask, did Mr. WHITEHEAD give us none of the songs relating to these worthies? Surely he could not have known of their existence.

† Ballad-mongers.

of me, they'll at least not put such cursed stuff as that into my mouth; but make me speak as I ever felt, like a man who never either feared death, or turned his back upon his friend. In the meantime I'll give them something to talk about. This ride of mine shall ring in their ears long after I'm done for—put to bed with a mattock, and tucked up with a spade.

> And when I'm gone, boys, each huntsman shall say,
> None rode like Dick Turpin, so far in a day.

"And thou, too, brave Bess!—thy name shall be linked with mine, and we'll go down to posterity together; and what," added he despondingly, "if it should be too much for thee? what if——but no matter. Better die now, while I am with thee, than fall into the knacker's hands. Better die now, with all thy honours upon thy head, than drag out thy old age at the sand dcart. Hark-forward, lass—hark-forward!"

By what peculiar instinct it is that this noble animal, the horse, will at once perceive the slightest change in his master's physical tem-

perament, and allow himself so to be influenced by it, that, according as his master's spirits fluctuate, will his own energies rise and fall, wavering

> From walk to trot—from canter to full speed?

How is it, we ask of those more intimately acquainted with the metaphysics of the huoyhnymn than we pretend to be—do the saddle or the rein convey, like metallic tractors, vibrations of the spirit betwixt the two? We know not—but this much is certain, that no servant partakes so much of the character of his master, as the horse. The horse, we are wont to ride, becomes a portion of ourselves. He thinks and feels with us. As we are lively, he is sprightly—as we are depressed, his courage droops. In proof of this, let the reader see what horses some men make—*make* we say, because in such hands their character is wholly altered. Partaking, in a measure, of the courage and the firmness of the hand that guides them, and of the resolution of the frame that sways

them—what their rider wills they do, or strive to do. When that governing power is relaxed, their energies are relaxed likewise; and their fine sensibilities supply them with an instant knowledge of the disposition and capacity of the rider. A gift of the gods is the gallant steed, which, like any other faculty we possess, to use or to abuse—to command or to neglect—rests with ourselves: he is the best general test of our own self-government.

Black Bess's action amply verified what we have just asserted; for during Turpin's momentary despondency, her pace was perceptibly diminished and her force retarded; but as he revived, she rallied instantly, and, seized apparently with a kindred enthusiasm, snorted joyously, as she recovered her speed. Now was it that her hereditary endurance told that the child of the desert had showed herself the offspring of the hardy loins from whence she sprung. Full fifty miles had she sped, yet she showed no symptom of distress. If possible, she appeared fresher than when she started. She

had breathed—her limbs were suppler — her action freer—easier—lighter. Her sire, who, upon his trackless wilds could have outstripped the pestilent Simoom, with throat unslaked, and hunger unappeased — could thrice have seen the scorching sun go down — had not greater powers of endurance. His vigour was her heritage. Her dam, who upon the velvet sod was of almost unapproachable swiftness, and who had often brought her owner golden assurances of her worth, could scarce have kept pace with her, and would have sunk under a third of her fatigue. But Bess was a paragon. We ne'er shall look upon her like again, unless we can prevail upon some Bedouin Chief to present us with a brood mare, and then the racing world shall see what a breed we will introduce into this country. Eclipse, Childers, or Hambletonian, shall be nothing to our colts, and even the rail-road slow travelling compared with the speed of our new nags.

But to return to Bess, or rather to go along with her, for there is no halting now; we are

going at the rate of twenty knots an hour—sailing before the wind; and you must either keep pace with us, or drop astern, Reader!—Bess is now in her speed, and Dick happy. Happy!—he is enraptured—maddened—furious—intoxicated as with wine. Pshaw! wine could never throw him into such a burning delirium. Its choicest juices have no inspiration like this. Its fumes are slow and heady. This is ethereal, transporting. His blood spins through his veins—winds round his heart—mounts to his brain. Away—away! He is wild with joy. Hall, cot, tree, tower, glade, mead, waste, or woodland, are seen, passed, left behind, and vanish as in a dream. Motion is scarce perceptible—it is impetus—propulsion. The horse and her rider are driven forward, as it were, by self-accelerated speed. A hamlet is visible in the moonlight. It is scarce discovered, ere the flints sparkle beneath the mare's hoofs. A moment's clatter upon the stones, and it is left behind. Again, it is the silent, smiling country. Now they are buried in the darkness of woods—now sweeping along on

the wide plain—now clearing the unopened toll-bar—now trampling over the hollow-sounding bridge, their shadows momently reflected in the placid mirror of the stream—now scaling the hill side a thought more slowly—now plunging, as the horses of Phœbus into the ocean, down its precipitous sides.

The limits of two shires are already past. They are within the confines of a third. They have entered the merry county of Huntingdon—they have surmounted the gentle hill that slips into Godmanchester. They are by the banks of the rapid Ouse—the bridge is past, and as Turpin rode through the deserted streets of Huntingdon, he heard the eleventh hour given from the iron tongue of Saint Mary's spire. In four hours (it was about seven when he had started) Dick had accomplished full sixty miles!

A few reeling topers in the streets saw the horseman flit past, and one or two windows were thrown open; but peeping Tom of Coventry would have had small chance of

beholding the unveiled beauties of Queen Godiva, had she ridden at the rate of Dick Turpin. He was gone, like a meteor, almost as soon as he appeared.

Huntingdon is left behind, and he is once more surrounded by dew-gemmed hedges and silent slumbering trees; broad meadows or pasture land, with drowsy cattle, or low bleating sheep, lie on either side; but what to Turpin, at that moment, is nature, animate or inanimate? He thinks only of his mare—his future fame. None are by to see him ride—no stimulating plaudits ring in his ears—no thousand hands are clapping—no thousand voices huzzaing—no handkerchiefs are waved—no necks strained—no bright eyes rain down their influence upon him—no eagle orbs watch his motions—no bells are rung—no cup awaits his achievement—no sweepstakes—no plate. But it will be renown—everlasting renown: it will be fame, which will not die with him—which will keep his reputation, albeit a tarnished one, still in the mouths of men.

He wants all these adventitious excitements, but he has that within which is a greater excitement than all these. He is conscious that he is doing a deed to live by. If not riding for *life*, that he is riding for *immortality;* and as the hero may perchance feel (for even a highwayman may feel like a hero), when he willingly throws away his existence in the hope of earning a glorious name, Turpin cared not what might befal himself, so he could proudly signalize himself as the first of his land,

> And witch the world with noble horsemanship.

What need had he of spectators? *The eye of posterity* was upon him; he felt the influence of that Argus glance which has made many a poor wight spur on his Pegasus with not half so good a chance of reaching the goal as Dick Turpin. Multitudes, yet unborn, he knew, would hear, and laud his deeds. He trembled with excitement, and Bess trembled under him. But the emotion was transient—on, on they fly:

the torrent leaping from the crag—the bolt from the bow—the air-cleaving eagle—thoughts themselves, are scarce more winged in their flight!

The night had hitherto been balmy and beautiful, with a bright array of stars, and a golden harvest moon, which seemed to diffuse even warmth with its radiance; but now Turpin was approaching the region of fog and fen, and he began to feel the influence of that dank atmosphere. The intersecting dykes—yawners—gullies—or whatever they are called, began to send forth their steaming vapours, and chilled the soft and wholesome air, obscuring the void, and in some instances as it were, choking up the road itself with vapour. But fog or fen was the same to Bess, her hoofs rattled merrily along the road, and she burst from a cloud, like Eöus at the break of dawn.

It was upon this occasion, that travelling through a fog of this kind, the moment they emerged from its dense canopy, they burst upon

the York Stage*. It was not an uncommon thing for the coach to be stopped; and so furious was the career of our highwayman, that the man involuntarily drew up his horses. Turpin had also to draw in his rein, a task of no little difficulty, as charging a huge lumbering coach, with its full complement of passengers, was more than even Bess could accomplish. The moon shone bright on Turpin and his mare. He was unmasked, and his features distinctly

* The following Notice is copied from an old *affiche*, still preserved in the Coffee Room of the Black Swan, at York:—"YORK FOUR DAYS! *Stage Coach, begins on Friday, the 18th of April*, 1706. All that are desirous to pass from London to York, or from York to London, or any other place on that road, let them repair to the Black Swan, in Holborn, in London, or to the Black Swan, in Coney Street, in York. At both which places they may be received in a *Stage Coach*, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, which performs the whole journey in four days (if God permits); and sets forth at five in the morning. And returns from York to Stamford in two days, and from Stamford, by Huntingdon, in two days more. And the like stages in their return. Allowing each passenger fourteen pounds weight, and all above three-pence per pound. Performed by Benjamin Kingman, Henry Harrison, and Walter Baynes."

visible. An exclamation was uttered by a gentleman on the box, who it appeared instantly recognised him.

"Pull up—draw your horses across the road," cried the gentleman—"that's Dick Turpin, the highwayman. His capture would be worth three hundred pounds to you," added he, addressing the coachman, "and is of equal importance to me. Stand!" shouted he, presenting a cocked pistol.

This resolution of the gentleman was not apparently agreeable, either to the coachman or the majority of the passengers—the name of Turpin acting like magic upon them. One man jumped off behind, and was with difficulty afterwards recovered, having tumbled into a deep ditch at the road side. An old gentleman with a cotton nightcap, who had popped out his head to swear at the coachman, drew it suddenly in. A faint scream in a female key issued from within, and there was a considerable hubbub on the roof. Amongst other ominous sounds, the guard was heard to click his long horse pistols.

"Stop the York four-day stage!" said he, forcing his smoky voice through a world of throat-embracing shawl; "the fastest coach in the kingdom: vos ever sich atrocity heard of? I say Joe, keep them ere leaders steady—we shall all be in the ditch. Don't you see where the hind wheels are? Who—whoop, I say."

The gentleman on the box now discharged his pistol, and the confusion within was redoubled. The white night-cap was popped out like a rabbit's head, and as quickly popped back, on hearing the highwayman's voice. Owing to the plunging of the horses, the gentleman had missed his aim.

Prepared for such emergencies as the present, and seldom at any time taken aback, Dick received the fire without flinching. He then lashed the horses out of his course, and rode up, pistol in hand, to the gentleman who had fired. "Major Mowbray," said he, in a stern tone, "I know you. I meant not either to assault you or these gentlemen—yet you have attempted my life, Sir, a second time. But you are now in my power, and by hell, if you do not answer

the questions I put to you, nothing earthly shall save you."

"If you ask aught I may not answer, fire!" said the Major; "I will never ask life from such as you."

"Have you seen aught of Sir Luke Rookwood?" asked Dick.

"The villain you mean is not yet secured," replied the Major, "but we have traces of him. 'Tis with the view of procuring more efficient assistance that I ride to town."

"They have not met then since?" said Dick, carelessly.

"Met! Whom do you mean?"

"Your sister and Sir Luke," said Dick.

"My sister meet him!" cried the Major, angrily—"think you he dare show himself at Rookwood?"

"Ho—ho!" laughed Dick—"she *is* at Rookwood then? A thousand thanks, Major—good-night to you, gentlemen."

"Take that with you, and remember the guard," cried the *janitor*, who, unable to take

aim from where he sat, had crept along the coach roof, and discharged thence one of his large horse pistols at what he took to be the highwayman's head, but which, luckily for Dick, was his hat, which he had raised to salute the passengers.

"Remember you," said Dick, coolly replacing his perforated beaver on his brow, "you may rely upon it, my fine fellow, I'll not forget you, the next time we meet."

And off he went like the breath of the whirlwind.

CHAPTER VI.

O'er moss and moor, o'er holt and hill,
His track the steady bloodhounds trace;
O'er moss and moor, unwearied still,
The furious Earl pursues the chase.
THE WILD HUNTSMEN.

WE will now make inquiries after Mr. Coates and his party, of whom both we and Dick Turpin have for some time lost sight. With unabated ardour did the vindictive man of law and his myrmidons press forward. A tacit compact seemed to have been entered into between the highwayman and his pursuers, that he was to fly while they were to follow. Like bloodhounds, they kept steadily upon his trail—nor were they so far behind as Dick imagined. At each post house they passed, they obtained fresh horses, and, while these were saddling, a post-boy

was dispatched *en courier* to order relays at the next station. In this manner they proceeded after the first stoppage without interruption. Horses were in waiting for them, as they, "bloody with spurring, fiery hot with haste," and their jaded hacks arrived. Turpin had been heard or seen in all quarters. Turnpike men—waggoners, carters, trampers, all had seen him. Besides, strange as it may sound, they placed some faith in his word. York they believed would be his destination.

At length the coach which Dick had encountered, hove in sight. There was another stoppage and another hubbub. The old gentleman's nightcap was again manifested, and suffered a sudden occultation, as upon the former occasion. The post-boy, who was in advance, had halted, and given up his horse to Major Mowbray, who exchanged his seat on the box for one on the saddle, deeming it more expedient, after his interview with Turpin, to return to Rookwood, rather than to proceed to town. The post-boy was placed behind Coates, as being

the lightest weight; and, thus reinforced, the party pushed forward as rapidly as heretofore.

Eighty and odd miles had now been traversed—the boundary of another county, Northampton, passed; yet no rest, nor respite, had Dick Turpin or his unflinching mare enjoyed. But here he deemed it fitting to make a brief halt.

Bordering the beautiful domains of Burleigh house, stood a little retired hostelrie of some antiquity, which bore the great Lord Treasurer's arms. With this house Dick was not altogether unacquainted. The lad who acted as ostler was known to him. It was now midnight, but a bright and beaming night. To the door of the stable then did Dick ride, and knocked in a peculiar manner. Reconnoitering Dick through a broken pane of glass in the lintel, and apparently satisfied with his scrutiny, the lad thrust forth a head of hair as full of straw as mad Tom's is represented to be upon the stage. A chuckle of welcome followed his sleepy salu-

tation. "Glad to see you, Captain Turpin," said he, "can I do any thing for you?"

"Get me a couple of bottles of brandy, and a beef-steak," said Dick.

"As to the brandy, you can have that in a jiffy—but the steak, Lord love 'ye, the old ooman won't stand it at this time; but there's a cold round, mayhap a slice of that might do—or a knuckle of ham?"

"D–m your knuckles, Ralph," cried Dick, "have you any raw meat in the house?"

"Raw meat!" echoed Ralph, in surprise, "oh yes, there's a rare rump o' beef—you can have a cut off that if you like."

"That's the thing I want," said Dick, ungirthing his mare; "give me the scraper—there—I can get a whisp of straw from your head—now run and get the brandy—better bring three bottles—uncork 'em, and let me have half a pail of water to mix with the spirit."

"A pail full of brandy and water to wash down a raw steak—my eyes!" exclaimed Ralph,

opening wide his sleepy peepers, adding, as he went about the execution of his task, " I always thought them Rum-padders, as they calls themselves, rum fellows, but now I'm sartin sure on it."

The most sedulous groom could not have bestowed more attention upon the horse of his heart, than Dick Turpin now paid to his mare. He scraped, chafed, and dried her, sounded each muscle, traced each sinew, pulled her ears, examined the state of her feet, and, ascertaining that " her withers were unwrung," finally washed her from head to foot in the diluted spirit; not however before he had conveyed a thimbleful of the liquid to his own parched throat, and replenished what Falstaff calls a " pocket pistol " which he had about him. While Ralph was engaged in rubbing her down after her bath, Dick occupied himself, not in dressing the raw steak in the manner the stable boy had anticipated, but in rolling it round the bit of his bridle.

" She will now go as long as there's breath in

her body," said he, putting the flesh-covered iron within her mouth.

The saddle being once more replaced, after champing a moment or two at the bit, Bess began to snort, and paw the earth, as if impatient of delay; and, acquainted as he was with her indomitable spirit and power, her condition was a surprise even to Dick himself. Her vigour seemed inexhaustible, her vivacity was not a whit diminished, but as she was led into the open space, her step was as light and free as when she started on her ride, and her sense of sound as quick as ever. Suddenly she pricked her ears, and uttered a low neigh. A dull tramp was audible.

"Ha!" exclaimed Dick, springing into his saddle, "they come."

"Who come, Captain?" asked Ralph.

"The road takes a turn here—don't it?" asked Dick, "sweeps round to the right—by the plantations in the hollow?"

"Ay—ay—Captain," answered Ralph, "it's plain you knows the ground."

"What lies behind yon shed?"

"A stiff fence, Captain—a reg'lar rasper—beyond that a hill side steep as a house—no oss as was ever shoed can go down it."

"Indeed!" laughed Dick.

A loud halloo from Major Mowbray, who seemed advancing upon the wings of the wind, told Dick that he was discovered. The Major was a superb horseman, and took the lead of his party. Striking his spurs deeply into his horse, and giving him bridle enough, the Major seemed to shoot forwards like a shell through the air. The Burleigh Arms retired some hundred yards from the road, the space in front being occupied by a neat garden, with low clipped hedges. No tall timber intervened between Dick and his pursuers, so that the motions of both parties were visible to each other. Dick saw in an instant that if he now started, he should come into collision with the Major exactly at the angle of the road, and he was by no means desirous of hazarding such a rencontre. He looked wistfully back at the double fence.

"Come into the stable—quick, Captain, quick," exclaimed Ralph.

"The stable?—" echoed Dick, hesitating.

"Ay, the stable—it's your only chance. Don't you see he's turning the corner, and they are all coming—quick, Sir, quick."

Dick, lowering his head, rode into the tenement, the door of which was most unceremoniously slapped in the Major's face, and bolted on the other side.

"Villain!" cried Major Mowbray, thundering at the door. "Come forth—you are now fairly trapped at last—caught like the woodcock in your own springe. We have you—open the door I say, and save us the trouble of forcing it. You cannot escape us. We will burn the building down, but we'll have you."

"What do you want, measter?" cried Ralph, from the lintel, whence he reconnoitred the Major, and kept the door fast. "You 're clean mistaken—there be no one here."

"We'll soon see that," said Paterson, who had now arrived; and, leaping from his horse, the chief constable took a short run, to give him-

self impetus, and with his foot burst open the door. This being accomplished, in dashed the Major and Paterson, but the stable was vacant. A door was open at the back. They rushed to it. The sharply sloping sides of a hill slipped abruptly downwards, within a yard of the door. It was a perilous descent to the horseman, yet the print of a horse's heels was visible in the dislodged turf, and scattered soil.

"Confusion!" cried the Major, "he has escaped us."

"He is yonder," said Paterson, pointing out Turpin moving swiftly through the steaming meadow. "See, he makes again for the road—he clears the fence. A regular throw he has given us by ——."

"Nobly done, by heaven!" cried the Major: "With all his faults, I honour the fellow's courage, and admire his prowess. He's already ridden to-night, as I believe never man rode before. I would not have ventured to slide down that wall, for it's nothing else, with the enemy at my heels. What say you,

gentlemen? have you had enough—shall we let him go, or ——?"

"As far as chase goes, I don't care if we bring the matter to a conclusion," said Titus. "I don't think, as it is, that I shall have a sate to sit on this week to come. I've lost leather most confoundedly."

"What says Mr. Coates?" asked Paterson. "I look to him."

"Then mount, and off," cried Coates, "Public duty requires that we should take him."

"And *private pique*," returned the Major. "No matter—the end is the same—justice shall be satisfied. To your steeds, my merry men all. Hark, and away."

Once more upon the move, Titus forgot his distress, and addressed himself to the attorney, by whose side he rode.

"What place is that we're coming to?" asked he, pointing to a cluster of moonlit spires belonging to a town which they were rapidly approaching.

"Stamford," replied Coates.

"Stamford!" echoed Titus; "by the powers then, we've ridden a matter of ninety miles. Why the great deeds of Redmond O'Hanlon were nothing to this. I'll remember it to my dying day, and with rason," added he, slightly altering his position on the saddle.

"And who was Redmond O'Hanlon?" inquired Coates, desirous of keeping Titus in good humour.

"A famous Rapparee, or Tory," replied the Irishman. "Just such another as Dick Turpin, though not quite such a desperate fellow on horseback. But, talking about Tories, did I never sing you a song I made in praise of 'em?"

"Never," said Coates. "I should like, of all things, to hear it. Might I ask the favour now. You can give it an excellent *running* accompaniment to your *laud-a-Tory* strain."

"I shan't do it justice, I'm afraid," said Titus, still wincing in his seat; "but, however, to please you, I'll do my best;" and with lusty lungs, that drowned even the rattle of their

horses, Titus sang as follows:—to the tune of the *Groves of the Pool.*

THE RAPPAREES.

Let the Englishman boast of his Turpins and Shepherds, as cocks of the walk,
His Mulsacks, and Cheneys, and Swiftnecks*—it's all botheration and talk;
Compared with the robbers of Ireland, they don't come within half a mile,
There never were yet any rascals, like those of my own native isle.

First and foremost comes REDMOND O'HANLON, allowed the first thief of the world†,
That o'er the broad province of Ulster, the Rapparee banner unfurled;
Och! he was an elegant fellow, as ever you saw in your life,
At fingering the blunderbuss trigger, or handling the throat-cutting knife.

* A trio of famous high Tobygloaks; Swiftneck was a captain of *Irish* dragoons by the bye.

† REDMOND O'HANLON was the Rob Roy of Ireland, and his adventures, many of which are exceedingly curious, would furnish as rich *materials* for the novelist, as they have already done for the ballad mongers: some of them are, however, sufficiently well narrated in a pleasant little tome, published at Belfast, entitled *The History of the Rapparees*, from which we have here as elsewhere quoted. We are also in possession of a funeral discourse preached at the obsequies of the "noble and renowned" Henry St. John, Esq.

And then such a dare devil squadron as that which composed
REDMOND'S *tail!*
Meel, Mactigh, Jack Reilly, Shan Bernagh, Phil Galloge, and
Arthur O'Neal;

who was unfortunately killed by the *Tories*—in the induction to which, we find some allusion to Redmond. After describing the thriving condition of the North of Ireland, about 1680, the Rev. Lawrence Power, the author of the sermon, says, "One mischief there was, which indeed in a great measure destroyed all, and that was, a pack of insolent bloody outlaws, whom they here call *Tories*. These had so riveted themselves in these parts, what by the interest they had among the natives, and some English too, *to their shame be it spoken*, that they exercise a kind of separate sovereignty in three or four counties in the North of Ireland. REDMOND O'HANLON is their chief, and has been these many years; a cunning, dangerous fellow, who, though proclaimed an outlaw with the rest of his crew, and sums of money set upon their heads, yet he reigns still, and keeps all in subjection, so far, that 'tis credibly reported *he raises more in a year by contribution à-la-mode de France, than the King's Land taxes and Chimney money come to, and thereby is enabled to bribe clerks and officers,* IF NOT THEIR MASTERS (!) *and makes all too much truckle to him.*" Agitation, it seems, was not confined to our day—but the "finest country in the world" has been, and ever will be the same. The old game is played under a new colour—the only difference is, that had Redmond lived in our time, he would in all probability, not only have pillaged a County, but *represented* it in Parliament. The spirit of the Rapparee is still abroad—though we fear there is little of the *Tory* left about it. We recommend this note to the serious consideration of the declaimers against the sufferings of the "six millions."

Shure never were any boys like 'em, for rows, *agitation*, and sprees;
Scarce a *rap* did they leave in the country, and hence they were called *Rap*parees*.

Next comes POWER the great Tory† of Munster, a gentleman born every inch,
And strong JACK MACPHERSON of Leinster, a horse-shoe who broke at a pinch;
The last was a fellow so *lively*, not death e'en his courage could damp,
For as he was led to the gallows, he played his own 'march to the camp‡.'

PADDY FLEMING, DICK BALF, and MULHONI, I think, are the next on my list,
All adepts in the beautiful science of giving a pocket a twist;
JEMMY CARRICK § must follow his leaders, *ould* Purney who put in a huff,
By dancing a hornpipe at Tyburn, and bothering the hangman for snuff.

* Here Titus was slightly in error; he mistook the cause for the effect. "They were called Rapparees," Mr. Malone says, "from being armed with a half pike, called by the Irish a *rapery*."—TODD'S JOHNSON.

† *Tory*, so called from the Irish word *Toree*, give me your money.—TODD'S JOHNSON.

‡ As he was carried to the gallows, Jack played a fine tune of his own composing on the bagpipe, which retains the name of Macpherson's tune to this day.—HISTORY OF THE RAPPAREES.

§ This shameless conduct of the Tory, we regret to say, had a precedent in the case of one TOM COX, who, just before he was

There's PAUL LIDDY the curly-pate Tory, whose noddle was
stuck on a spike,
And BILLY DELANEY the "Songster*," we never shall meet
with his like;
For his neck by a witch was anointed, and warranted safe by
her charm,
No hemp that was ever yet twisted, his wonderful throttle
could harm.

turned off, kicked Mr. Smith, the ordinary, and the hangman, out of the cart.

* "Notwithstanding he was so great a rogue, Delaney was a handsome portly man, very diverting in company, and could behave himself before gentlemen very agreeably. *He had a political genius* (not altogether surprising in so eminent a Tory) and would have made a great proficiency in learning if he had rightly applied his time. He composed several songs, and put tunes to them; and by his skill in music had gained the favour of some of the leading musicians in the country, who endeavoured to get him reprieved."—HISTORY OF THE RAPPAREES. We have already given some account of Delaney, and of Cahir na Cappul, the "*Whisperer*," in our first volume. They were both indebted, we believe, to the same *ould* woman for their enchantments. The particulars of the *Songster's* execution are singular.—"When he was brought into court to receive sentence of death, the Judge told him that he was informed he should say 'that there was not a rope in Ireland sufficient to hang him. But,' says he, 'I'll try if Kilkenny can't afford one strong enough to do your business; and if that will not do, you shall have another and another.' Then he ordered the Sheriff to choose a rope, and Delaney was ordered for execution the next day. The Sheriff, having notice of his mother's boasting that no rope could hang her son (and pursuant to the Judge's desire), provided two ropes, but Delaney

And lastly there's CAHIR NA CAPPUL, the handiest rogue of them all,
Who only need whisper a word, and your horse will trot out of his stall;
Your tit is not safe in your stable, though you or your groom should be near,
And devil a bit in the paddock, if CAHIR gets *hould* of his ear.

Then success to the Tories of Ireland, the generous, the gallant, the gay,
With them the best *Rumpads** of England are not to be named the same day;
And were further proof wanting to show what precedence we take with our *prigs*,
Recollect that *our* robbers are TORIES, while those of *your* country are WHIGS.

Tyrconnel's song was barely completed, when they reached Stamford. Their first inquiry was for post-horses.

broke them one after another! The Sheriff was then in a rage, and went for three bed cords, which he plaited three-fold together, *and they did his business.* Yet the Sheriff was afraid he was not dead; and in a passion, to make trial, stabbed him with his sword in the soles of his feet, and at last cut the rope. After he was cut down his body was carried into the court-house, where it remained in the coffin for two days, standing up, till the Judge and all the spectators were fully satisfied that he was stiff and dead, and then permission was given to his friends to remove the corpse and bury it!

HISTORY OF THE RAPPAREES.

* Highwayman.

CHAPTER VII.

"Dost fear? Dost fear? The moon shines clear;
Dost fear to ride with me?
Hurrah! hurrah—the dead can ride!"
"Oh William let them be!
See there, see there! what yonder swings,
And creaks, mid whistling rain?"
"Gibbet and steel, the accursed wheel—
A murderer in his chain."

WILLIAM AND HELEN.

DICK TURPIN meanwhile held bravely on his course.—Bess was neither strained by her gliding passage down the slippery hill side, nor shaken by *larking* the fence in the meadow. As Dick said, "*It took a devilish deal to take it out of her.*" On regaining the high road, she resumed her old pace, and once more they were distancing Time's swift chariot in its whirling passage o'er the earth. Stamford, and the tongue of Lincoln's fenny shire, upon which it is situated, are passed almost in a breath. Rutland is won,

and past, and Lincolnshire once more entered. The road now verged within a bow-shot of that sporting Athens (Corinth, perhaps, we should say) Melton Mowbray. Melton was then unknown to fame, but, asif inspired by that *furor venaticus* which now inspires all who come within twenty miles of this Charybdis of the chase, Bess here *let out* in a style with which would have puzzled the best Leicestershire squire's best prad to have kept pace. The spirit which she imbibed through the pores of her skin, and the juices of the meat she had champed, seemed to have communicated preternatural excitement to her. Her pace was absolutely terrific—her eyeballs were dilated, and glowed like flaming carbuncles; while her widely-distended nostril seemed, in the cold moonshine, to snort forth smoke, as from a hidden fire. Fain would Turpin have controuled her; but, without bringing into play all his tremendous nerve, no check could be given her headlong course, and for once, and the only time in her submissive career, Bess resolved to have

her own way—and she had it. Like a sensible fellow, Dick conceded the point.—There was something even of conjugal philosophy in his self communion upon the occasion. "E'en let her take her own way and be hanged to her, for an obstinate, self-willed jade as she is," said he; "now her back is up, there 'll be no stopping her, I'm sure: she rattles away like a woman's tongue, and when that once begins, we all know what chance the curb has. Best to let her have it out, or rather to lend her a lift—'twill be over the sooner.—Tantivy, lass—Tantivy! I know which of us will tire first."

We have before said, that the vehement excitement of continued swift riding produces a paroxysm in the sensorium, amounting to delirium. Dick's blood was again on fire. He was first giddy, as after a deep draught of kindling spirit; this passed off, but the spirit was still in his veins—the *estro* was working in his brain. All his ardour, his eagerness, his fury, returned—he rode like one insane,

and his courser partook of his frenzy. She bounded—she leaped—she tore up the ground beneath her—while Dick gave vent to his exultation in one wild prolonged halloo. More than half his race is run. He has triumphed over every difficulty. He will have no further occasion to halt. Bess carries her forage along with her. The course is straightforward—success seems certain—the goal already reached—the path of glory won. Another wild halloo, to which the echoing woods reply, and away—!

Away!—away!—thou matchless steed!—yet brace fast thy sinews—hold, hold thy breath, for alas the goal is *not* yet attained!

> But forward—forward, on they go,
> High snorts the straining steed,
> Thick pants the rider's labouring breath,
> As headlong on they speed!

As the eddying currents sweep over its plains in howling bleak December, did the pair pass over what remained of Lincolnshire. Grantham is gone, and now more slowly are they looking

up the ascent of Gonerby hill, a path well known to Turpin; where often, in by-gone nights, had many a purse changed its owner. With that feeling of independence and exhilaration which every one feels, we believe, on having climbed the hill side, Turpin turned to gaze around. There was triumph in his eye, but the triumph was checked as his glance fell upon a gibbet near him to the right, on a round point of hill which is a landmark to the wide vale of Belvoir. Pressed as he was for time, Dick immediately struck out of the road, and approached the spot where it stood. Two scarecrow objects, covered with rags and rusty links of chain, depended from the tree. A night crow screaming around the carcases, added to the hideous effect of the scene. Nothing but the living highwayman and his skeleton brethren were visible upon the solitary spot. Around him was the lonesome waste of hill, o'erlooking the moonlit valley—beneath his feet, a patch of bare and lightning-blasted sod—above, the wan

declining moon and skies, flaked with ghostly clouds—before him, the bleached bodies of the murderers, for such they were.

"Will this be my lot, I marvel?" said Dick, looking upwards, with an involuntary shudder.

"Ay, marry, will it," cried a crouching figure, suddenly springing from beside a tuft of briars that skirted the blasted ground.

Dick started in his saddle, while Bess reared and plunged, at the sight of this unexpected apparition.

"What, ho! thou devil's dam, Barbara, is it thou?" exclaimed Dick, re-assured upon discovering that it was the gipsy queen, and no spectre whom he beheld. "Stand still, Bess—stand, lass. What dost thou here, mother of darkness? Art gathering mandrakes for thy poisonous messes, or pilfering flesh from the dead. Meddle not with their bones, or I will drive thee hence. What dost thou here, I say, old dam of the gibbet?"

"I come to die here!" replied Barbara, in a feeble tone, and, throwing back her hood, she displayed features well nigh as ghastly as those of the skeletons above her.

"Indeed," replied Dick. "You've made choice of a pleasant spot, it must be owned. But you'll not die yet."

"Knowest thou whose these bodies are?" said Barbara, pointing upwards.

"Two of thy race," replied Dick; "right brethren of the blade."

"Two of my sons," cried Barbara; "my twin children. I am come to lay my bones beneath their bones—my sepulchre shall be their sepulchre; my body feed the fowls of the air as their's have fed them. And if ghosts can walk, we'll scour this heath together. I tell thee what, Dick Turpin," said the hag, drawing as near to the highwayman, as Bess would permit her; "dead men walk and ride—ay, *ride*—there's a comfort for thee. I've seen these do it. I have seen them fling off their chains, and dance—ay dance with me—with their mother.

No revels like dead men's revels, Dick. I shall soon join 'em."

"But you will not lay violent hands upon yourself, mother?" said Dick, with difficulty mastering his terror.

"No," replied Barbara, in an altered tone. "But I will let Nature do her task—would she could do it more quickly, but such a life as mine won't go out without a long struggle. What have I to live for now? All are gone—*she and her child!* But what is this to thee? Thou hast no child—And if thou hadst, thou couldst not feel like a father—but no matter—I rave. Listen to me. I have crawled hither to die. 'Tis five days since I beheld thee, and during that time, food has not passed these lips—nor aught of moisture, save Heaven's dew, cooled this parched throat, nor shall they to the last. That time cannot be far off—and now canst guess *how* I mean to die? —Begone, and leave me—thy presence troubles me. I would breathe my last breath alone, with none to witness the parting pang."

"I will not trouble you more, mother," said Dick, turning his mare, "nor will I ask your blessing."

"My blessing!" scornfully ejaculated Barbara. "Thou shalt have it if thou wilt, but thou wilt find it a curse. Stay—a thought strikes me. Whither goest thou?"

"To seek Sir Luke Rookwood," replied Dick; "know you aught of him?"

"Sir Luke Rookwood!—thou seekest him—thou wouldst find him!"—screamed Barbara.

"I would," said Dick.

"And thou *wilt* find him," said Barbara—"and that ere long. But I shall ne'er again behold him—would I could! But I have a message for him—one of life and death. Wilt thou convey it to him?"

"I will," said Dick.

"Swear by those bones to do so," cried Barbara, pointing with her skinny fingers to the gibbet. "That thou wilt do my bidding."

"I swear," cried Dick.

"Fail not, or we will haunt thee to thy life's

end," cried Barbara, adding, as she gave a sealed package to the highwayman. "Give this to Sir Luke—to him alone. I would have sent it to him by other hands ere this, but my people have deserted me—have pillaged my stores—have rifled me of all, save this. I who —but no matter. Give this, I say, to Sir Luke, with thy own hands:—thou hast sworn it, and wilt obey. Give it to him, and bid him, as he opens it, to think of Sybil. But this must not be till Eleanor is in his power; and she must be present when the seal is broken. It relates to both. Dare not thou to tamper with it, or my curse shall pursue thee. That packet is guarded with a triple spell, which to thee were fatal. Obey me, and my dying breath shall bless thee."

"Never fear," said Dick, taking the packet—"I'll not disappoint you, mother, depend upon it."

"Hence," cried the crone; and as she watched Dick's figure lessening upon the Waste, and at length beheld him finally disappear down the

hill side, she sank to the ground, her frail strength being entirely exhausted—"Body and soul may now part in peace," gasped she—"All I lived for is accomplished." And ere one hour had elapsed, the night crow was perched upon her still breathing frame.

Long pondering upon this singular interview, Dick pursued his way. At length he thought fit to examine the packet, with which the old gipsy had entrusted him.—"It feels like a casket!" thought he; "it can't be gold—but then it may be jewels—though they don't rattle, and it ain't quite heavy enough. What can it be?—I should like to know. There is some mystery that's certain, about it—but I will not break the seal, not I. As to her spell—that I don't value a rush, but I've sworn to give it to Sir Luke, and deliver her message, and I'll keep my word if I can—he shall have it." Saying which, he replaced it in his pocket.

CHAPTER VIII.

The sight renewed my courser's feet
A moment, staggering feebly fleet
A moment, with a faint low neigh
He answered, and then fell;
With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,
And reeking limbs immovable,
His first and last career is done.

MAZEPPA.

TIME presses. We may not linger in our course. We must fly on before our flying highwayman. Full forty miles shall we pass over in a breath. Two more hours have elapsed, and he still urges his headlong career, with heart resolute as ever, and purpose yet unchanged. Fair Newark, and the dashing Trent, "most loved of England's streams," are gathered to his laurels. Broad Notts and its heavy paths, and sweeping glades—its waste (forest no more) of Sherwood past—bold Robin and his merry men, his Marian and his moonlight rides

recalled, forgotten, left behind.—Hurrah! Hurrah! that wild halloo! that waving arm, that enlivening shout! What means it? He is once more upon Yorkshire ground—his horse's hoof beats once more the soil of that noble shire. So transported was Dick, that he could almost have flung himself from the saddle to kiss the dust beneath his feet. Thrice fifty miles has he run, nor has the morn yet dawned upon his labours. Hurrah—the end draws nigh. The goal is in view—halloo—halloo—on.

Bawtrey is past—he takes the lower road by Thorne and Selby. He is skirting the waters of the deep-channelled Don.

Bess now began to manifest some slight symptoms of distress. There was a strain in the carriage of her throat—a dulness in her eye—a laxity in her ear—and a slight stagger in her gait, which Turpin noticed with apprehension. Still she went on, though not at the same gallant pace as heretofore. But, as the tired bird still battles with the blast upon the ocean—as the

swimmer still stems the stream, though spent—on went she—nor did Turpin dare to check her—fearing that if she stopped she might lose her force, or that if she fell, she would rise no more.

It was now that gray and grimly hour, ere one flicker of orange or rose has gemmed the east, and when unwearying Nature herself seems to snatch brief repose. In the roar of restless cities, this is the only time when their strife is hushed. Midnight is awake—alive—the streets ring with laughter, and with rattling wheels. At the third hour, a dread deep silence prevails. The loud-voiced streets grow dumb. They are deserted of all, save the few guardians of the night, and the skulking robber. But even far removed from the haunts of men, and hum of towns, it is the same. "Nature's best nurse," seems to weigh Nature down, and stillness reigns throughout. Our feelings are in a great measure influenced by the hour, exposed to the raw crude atmosphere, which has neither the nipping, wholesome shrewdness of morn,

nor the profound chillness of night; the frame vainly struggles against the dull, miserable sensations engendered by the damps, and at once communicates them to the spirits. Hope forsakes us. We are weary, exhausted; our energy is dispirited. Sleep does "not weigh our eyelids down;" we stare upon the vacancy—we conjure up a thousand restless, disheartening images—we abandon projects we have formed, and which, viewed through this medium, appear fantastical, chimerical, absurd. We want rest, refreshment, energy.

We will not say that Turpin had all these misgivings. But he had to struggle hard with himself to set sleep and exhaustion at defiance.

The moon had set. The stars

> Pinnacled deep in the intense inane,
> SHELLEY,

had all—save one, the herald of the dawn, withdrawn their lustre—a dull mist lay on the stream—and the air became piercing cold. Turpin's chilled fingers could scarcely grasp the slackening rein, while his eyes, irritated by the

keen atmosphere, scarce enabled him to distinguish surrounding objects, or even to guide his steed. It was owing, probably, to this latter circumstance, that Bess suddenly floundered and fell, throwing her master over her head.

Turpin instantly recovered himself. His first thought was for his horse.—But Bess was instantly upon her legs—covered with dust and foam, sides and cheeks—and with her large eyes glaring wildly, almost piteously, upon her master.

"Art hurt, lass?" asked Dick, as she shook herself, and slightly shivered.—And he proceeded to the horseman's scrutiny. "Nothing but a shake—though that dull eye—those quivering flanks—" added he, looking earnestly at her. "She won't go much farther, and I must give it up—what, give up the race just when it's won? No, that can't be.—Ha—well thought on—I've a bottle of liquid, given me by an old fellow who was a knowing cove, and famous jockey in his day, which he swore would make a horse go as long as he'd a leg to carry him, and bade me

keep it for some great occasion.—I've never used it—but I'll try it now.—It should be in this pocket. Ah! Bess, wench, I fear I'm using thee, after all, as Sir Luke did his mistress, that I thought so like thee—but no matter—it will be a glorious end."

Raising her head upon his shoulder, Dick poured the contents of the bottle down the throat of his mare.—Nor had he to wait long before its invigorating effects were instantaneous. The fire was kindled in the glassy orb—her crest was once more erected—her flank ceased to quiver—and she neighed loud and joyously."

" Egad, the old fellow was right," cried Dick.—"The drink has worked wonders.—What the devil could it have been?—It smells like spirit," added he, examining the bottle. "I wish I'd left a taste for myself. But here's that will do as well."—And he drained his flask of the last drop of brandy.

Dick's limbs were now become so excessively stiff, that it was with difficulty he could remount his horse—but this necessary preliminary

being achieved by the help of a stile, he found no difficulty in resuming his accustomed position upon the saddle. We know not whether there was any likeness between our Turpin and that modern Hercules of the sporting world, Mr. Osbaldeston—far be it from us to institute any similitude, though we cannot help thinking that, in one particular, he resembled that famous "copper-bottomed" Squire. But this we will leave to our readers' discrimination. Dick bore his fatigues wonderfully—he suffered somewhat of that martyrdom which, according to Tom Moore, occurs "to weavers and M. P.'s, from sitting too long"—but once on his courser's back, he cared not for any thing.

Once more at a gallant pace is he traversing the banks of the Don, skirting the fields of flax that bound its sides, and hurrying far more swiftly than its current to its confluence with the Aire. Snaith was past. He was on the road to Selby when dawn first began to break. Here and there a twitter was heard in the hedge; a hare ran across his path, gray looking as the morning

self; and the mists began to rise from the earth. A bar of gold was drawn against the east, like the roof of a gorgeous palace; but the mists were heavy in this world of rivers and their tributary streams. The Ouse was before him, the Trent and Aire behind; the Don and Derwent on either hand, all in their way to commingle their currents ere they formed the giant Humber. Amid a region so prodigal of water, no wonder the dews fell thick as rain. Here and there the ground was clear; but then again came a volley of vapour palpable almost as smoke.

While involved in one of these fogs, Turpin became aware of another horseman by his side. It was impossible to discern the features of the rider, but his figure, in the mist, seemed gigantic; neither was the colour of his steed distinguishable. Nothing was visible but the meagre-looking phantom-like outline of a horse and his rider, and, as the unknown rode upon the turf that edged the way, even the sound of his horse's hoofs were scarce audible. Turpin gazed not without superstitious awe. Once or twice did he essay

to address the strange horseman, but his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. He fancied he discovered in the mist-exaggerated lineaments of the stranger a wild and fantastic resemblance to his friend, Tom King. "It must be Tom," thought Turpin; "he is come to warn me of my approaching end—I will speak to him."

But terror o'ermastered his speech—he could not force out a word, and thus side by side they rode in silence. Quaking with fears, he would scarce acknowledge to himself, Dick watched every motion of his companion—he was still, stern, spectre-like, erect, and looked for all the world like a demon on his phantom steed. His courser seemed, in the indistinct outline, to be huge and bony, and as he snorted furiously in the fog, Dick's heated imagination supplied his breath with a due proportion of flame. Not a word was spoken—not a sound heard, save the sullen dead beat of his heels upon the grass. It was intolerable to ride thus cheek by jowl with a goblin. Dick could stand it no longer—he put spurs to his horse, and endea-

voured to escape; but it might not be—the stranger, apparently without effort, was still by his side, and Bess's feet, in her master's apprehensions, were nailed to the ground. By and bye, however, the atmosphere became clearer—bright quivering beams burst through the vaporous shroud, and then it was that Dick discovered the apparition of Tom King was no other than Luke Rookwood. He was mounted on his old horse, Rook, and looked grim and haggard as a ghost vanishing at the crowing of the cock.

"Sir Luke Rookwood by this light!" exclaimed Dick, in astonishment. "Why I took you for——"

"The devil, no doubt?" returned Sir Luke, smiling sternly, "and were sorry to find me so hard pressed; but don't disquiet yourself, I am still flesh and blood."

"Had I taken you for one of mortal mould," said Dick, "you should have soon seen where I'd have put you in the race; but that d—d fog deceived me, and Bess acted the fool as well

myself. However, now I know you, Sir Luke, you must spur alongside, for the hawks are on the wing; and though I've much to say, I've not a second to lose." And Dick briefly detailed the particulars of his ride, concluding with his rencontre with Barbara. "Here's the packet," said he, "just as I got it—you must keep it till the proper moment. And here," added he, fumbling in his pocket for another paper, "is the marriage document. You are now your father's lawful son, let who will say you nay—take it and welcome. If you are ever master of Miss Mowbray's hand, you will not forget Dick Turpin."

"I will not," said Luke, eagerly grasping the certificate; "but she never may be mine."

"You have her oath?"

"I have."

"What more is needed?"

"Her hand."

"That will follow."

"It *shall* follow," replied Sir Luke, wildly. "Thou art right—she is my affianced bride—

affianced before hell, if not before heaven. I have purchased her hand at the penalty of my immortal soul, and it shall be mine. I have sealed the contract with blood—with Sybil's blood, and it shall be fulfilled—mine shall she be. I have her oath—her oath—ha, ha! Though I perish in the attempt, I will wrest her from Ranulph's grasp. Never shall she be his—I would stab her first—I hate him with all a *brother's* hatred. Dost know what that feeling is? No hate is like it. Twice have I failed in my endeavours to bear her off. I am from Rookwood even now; but to-night I shall renew the attack."

"To-night!" interrupted Dick.

"To-night. Wilt thou assist me?"

"I will—she is at Rookwood?"

"She languishes there at present, attended by her mother and her lover—ay, her lover—her favoured lover. The hall is watched and guarded—Ranulph is ever on the alert, and one more dangerous than him is Lady Rookwood. But we will storm their garrison—I have

a spy within its walls—a gipsy girl, faithful to my interests, Handassah. From her I have learnt that there is a plot to wed Eleanor to Ranulph—that the marriage is to take place privately to-morrow—this must be prevented."

"It must. But why not boldly advance, and claim her?"

"Why not? Askest thou that? I am a proscribed felon—a price is set upon my head—I am hunted through the country—I am driven to concealment, and dare not show myself for fear of capture. What could I do now? They would load me with fetters—bury me in a dungeon, and wed Eleanor to Ranulph. What would avail my rights? What would avail her oath to them? No; she must be mine by force. *His* she shall never be. Again, I ask thee, wilt thou aid me?"

"I will. Where is Alan Rookwood?"

"Concealed within the hut on Thorne Waste—thou know'st it—it was one of thy haunts."

"I know it well," said Dick, "and Conkey

Jem, its keeper, into the bargain—he is a knowing file. And you mean to try it on to-night for the last time?"

"I do."

"I'll join you at the hut at midnight, if all goes well. We'll bring off the wench, in spite of them all—just the thing I like; but in case of a break down on my part, suppose you take charge of my purse in the mean time."

Luke would have declined this offer.

"Pshaw," said Dick. "Who knows what may happen? and it's not ill lined either. You'll find an odd hundred or so, in that silken bag—it's not often your highwayman gives away a purse; but take it, man—we'll settle all to-night; and if I don't come, keep it—it will help you instead of me to your bride—and now off with you to the hut, for you are only hindering me. Adieu. My love to old Alan—we'll do the trick to-night. Away with you to the hut—keep yourself snug there till midnight, and we'll ride over to Rookwood."

"At midnight," replied Sir Luke, wheeling off—"I shall expect you."

"'Ware hawks," hallooed Dick.

But Luke had vanished. In another instant Dick was scouring the plain as rapidly as ever. In the mean time, as Dick has casually alluded to the hawks, it may not be amiss to inquire here how they have flown throughout the night, and whether they are still in chase of their quarry.—With the exception of Titus, who was completely done up at Grantham;—"having got," as he said, "a complete belly-full of it," they were still on the wing—and resolved sooner or later to pounce upon their prey—pursuing the same system as heretofore, in regard to the post horses. Major Mowbray and Paterson took the lead, but the irascible Attorney was not far in their rear, his wrath having been by no means allayed by the fatigue he had undergone. At Bawtrey they held council of war for a few minutes, being doubtful which course he had taken;—but their incertitude was relieved

by a foot traveller, who had heard Dick's loud halloo on passing the boundary of Nottinghamshire, and had seen him take the lower road. They struck, therefore, into the path to Thorne, at a hazard, and were soon satisfied they were right. Furiously did they now spur on. They reach Selby—they change horses at the inn in front of the fine old cathedral church;—and from the post-boy they learn that a toil-worn horseman, on a jaded steed, had ridden through the town, about five minutes before them, and could not be more than a quarter of a mile in advance. "His horse was so dead beat," said the lad, "that I'm sure he cannot have got far—and, if you look sharp, I'll be bound you'll overtake him before he reaches Cawood Ferry."

Mr. Coates was transported—"We'll lodge him snug in York Castle before an hour, Paterson," cried he, rubbing his hands.

"I hope so, Sir," said the Chief Constable—"but I begin to have some qualms."

"Now, gentlemen," shouted the post-boy—"come along—I'll soon bring you to him."

The sun had just o'ertopped the "high eastern hill" as Turpin reached the Ferry of Cawood, and his beams were reflected upon the deep and sluggish waters of the Ouse. Wearily had he dragged his course thither—wearily and slow. The powers of his gallant steed were spent, and he could scarcely keep her from sinking—yet still it was now midway 'twixt the hours of five and six—nine miles only lay 'twixt him, and that thought again revived him. He reached the water's edge—he hailed the ferry-boat, which was then on the other side of the river. At that instant a loud shout smote his ear—it was the halloo of his pursuers. Despair was in his look. —He cried to the boatman, and bade him pull fast.—The man obeyed, but he had to breast a strong stream—and had a lazy bark, and heavy sculls, to contend with. He had scarcely left the shore—when another shout was raised from the pursuers—the tramp of their steeds grew louder and louder.

The boat had scarcely reached the middle of the stream. His captors were at hand. Quietly

he walked down the bank—cautiously entered the water—there was a plunge—steed and rider were swimming down the river.

Major Mowbray was at the brink of the water. He hesitated an instant, and stemmed the tide. Seized as it were by a mania for equestrian distinction, Mr. Coates braved the torrent. Not so, Paterson. He very coolly took out his bull-dogs, and, watching Turpin, cast up in his own mind the pros and cons of shooting him as he was crossing. "I could certainly hit him," thought or said the constable; "but what of that? A dead highwayman is worth nothing—alive, he weighs 300*l*. I won't shoot him, but I'll make a pretence—" and he fired accordingly.

The shot skimmed over the water, but did not, as it was intended, do much mischief. It however occasioned a mishap, which had nearly proved fatal to our aquatic Attorney. Alarmed at the report of the pistol, in the nervous agitation of the moment, Coates drew in his rein so tightly that his steed instantly sank. A moment or two afterwards he rose, shaking his ears, and

floundering heavily towards the shore; and such was the chilling effect of this sudden immersion, that Mr. Coates now thought much more of saving himself, than of capturing Turpin. Dick, meanwhile, had reached the opposite bank, and, refreshed by her bath, Bess scrambled up the sides of the stream, and speedily regained the road. "I shall do it, yet," shouted Dick, "that stream has saved her.—Hark away, lass! —Hark away!"

Bess heard the cheering cry, and she answered to the call. She roused all her energies—she strained every sinew—she put forth all her remaining strength. Once more on wings of swiftness, she bore him away from his pursuers, and Major Mowbray, who had now scrambled on the shore, and made certain of securing him, beheld him spring, like a wounded hare, from beneath his very hand. "It cannot hold out," said the Major; "it is but an expiring flash—that horse must soon drop."

"She be regularly booked, that's certain," said the post-boy.—"We shall find her on the road."

Contrary to all expectation, however, Bess held on, and set pursuit at defiance. Her pace was swift as when she started—but it was unconscious and mechanical action—it wanted the ease, the lightness, the life of her former riding. She seemed screwed up to a task which she must execute. There was no flogging — no gory heel:—but the heart was throbbing, tugging at the sides within—and her spirit spurred her onwards. Her eye was glazing — her chest heaving—her flank quivering—her crest again fallen.—Yet she held on. "She is dying, by God," said Dick—"I feel it——." No, she held on.

Fulford is past.—The towers and pinnacles of York burst upon him in all the freshness, the beauty, and the glory of a bright, clear, autumnal morn. "The ancient city seemed to smile a welcome—a greeting.—The noble Minster and its serene and massive pinnacles, —crocketed, lantern-like, and beautiful — St. Mary's lofty spire—All Hallow's Tower—the massive mouldering walls of the adjacent postern—the grim castle—and Clifford's neigh-

bouring keep—all beamed upon him, "like a bright-eyed face, that laughs out openly."—"It is done—it is won," cried Dick. "Hurrah—hurrah." And the sunny air was cleft with his shouts.

Bess was not insensible to her master's exultation. She neighed feebly, and reeled forwards. It was a piteous sight to see her—to mark her staring, protruding eye-balls—her shaking flanks;—but, while life and limb held together, holds she on. Another mile is past. York is near.

"Hurrah," shouted Dick; but his voice was hushed.

Bess tottered—fell.—There was a dreadful gasp—a parting moan—a snort—her eye gazed, for an instant, upon her master, with a dying glare—then grew glassy, rayless, fixed—a shiver ran through her frame.—Her heart had burst.

Dick's eyes were blinded, as with rain. His triumph, though achieved, was forgotten—his present safety unthought of. He stood weeping and swearing like one beside himself.

"And art thou gone, Bess!" cried he, in a

despairing voice, lifting up his courser's head, and kissing her lips, covered with blood-flecked foam. "Gone—gone—and I have killed the best steed that was ever crossed!"

At that moment the deep bell of the Minster clock tolled out the hour of six.

"I am answered," said Dick; "it was to hear those strokes."

Turpin was roused from the state of stupefaction into which he had fallen by a smart slap on the shoulder. Recalled to himself by the blow, he started at once to his feet, while his hands sought his pistols, but he was spared the necessity of using them by discovering in the intruder the bearded visage of the gipsy Balthazar. The Patrico was habited in mendicant weeds, and sustained a large wallet upon his shoulders.

"So it's all over with the best mare in England, I see," said Balthazar; "but I can guess how it has happened—you are pursued."

"I am," said Dick, roughly.

"Your pursuers are at hand?"

"Within a few hundred yards."

"Then why stay here?—fly while you can."

"Never—never," cried Turpin; "I'll fight it out here—by Bess's side. Poor lass! I've killed her—but she has done it—ha, ha—we have won —what?" and his utterance was again choked.

"Hark! I hear the tramp of horse, and shouts," cried the Patrico. "Take this wallet—you will find a change of dress within it—dart into that thick copse—save yourself."

"But Bess—I cannot leave her," exclaimed Dick, with an agonizing look at his horse.

"And what died Bess for, but to save you?" rejoined the Patrico.

"True—true," said Dick; "but take care of her. Don't let those dogs of hell meddle ——"

"Away," cried the Patrico; "leave her to me."

Possessing himself of the wallet, Dick disappeared in the adjoining copse.

He had not been gone many seconds, when Major Mowbray rode up.

"Who is this?" exclaimed the Major, flinging himself from his horse, and seizing the Patrico: "this is not Turpin."

"Certainly not," replied Balthazar, coolly. "I am not exactly the figure for a highwayman."

"Where is he? what has become of him?" asked Coates in despair, as he and Paterson joined the Major.

"Escaped I fear," replied the Major. "Have you seen any one, fellow?" added he, addressing the Patrico.

"I have seen no one," replied Balthazar. "I am but this instant arrived—this dead horse lying in the road attracted my attention."

"Ha!"—exclaimed Paterson, leaping from his steed; "this may be Turpin after all. He has as many disguises as the devil himself, and may have carried that goat's hair in his pocket." Saying which he seized the Patrico by the beard, and shook it with as little reverence as the Gaul handled the chin of the Roman senator.

"The devil!—hands off," roared Balthazar. "By Salmon, but I shan't stand such usage—— Do you think a beard like mine is the growth of a few minutes? Hands off, I say."

"Regularly done!" said Paterson, removing his hold of the Patrico's chin, and looking as blank as a cartridge.

"Ay," exclaimed Coates, "all owing to this worthless piece of carrion. If it were not that I hope to see him dangling from those walls," pointing towards the Castle, "I should wish her master were by her side now. To the dogs with her;" and he was about to spurn the breathless carcase of poor Bess, when a sudden blow, dealt by the Patrico's staff, felled him to the ground.

"I'll teach you to molest me," said Balthazar, about to attack Paterson.

"Come, come," said the discomfited Chief Constable, "no more of this. It's plain we're in the wrong box. Every bone in my body aches sufficiently without the aid of your cudgel, old fellow. Come, Mr. Coates, take my arm, and let's be moving. We've had an infernal long ride for nothing."

"Not so," replied Coates; "I've paid pretty dearly for it. However, let us see if we can get any breakfast at the bowling-green, yonder; though I've already had my morning draught," added the facetious man of law, looking at his dripping apparel.

To the bowling-green the party proceeded, leaving the Patrico in undisturbed possession of the lifeless body of Black Bess. Major Mowbray ordered a substantial repast to be prepared with all possible expedition.

A countryman in a smock was busily engaged at his morning's meal.

"To see that fellow bolt down his breakfast, one would think he had fasted for a month," said Coates; "see the wholesome effects of an honest industrious life, Paterson. I envy him his appetite—I should fall to with more zest, were Dick Turpin in his place."

The countryman looked up. He was an odd-looking fellow, with a terrible squint, and a strange contorted countenance.

"An ugly dog!" exclaimed Paterson—"what a devil of a twist he has got!"

"What's that you says about Dick Taarpin?" asked the countryman, with his mouth half-full of bread.

"Have you seen aught of him?" asked Coates.

"Not I," mumbled the rustic—"but I hears aw the folk hereabouts talk on him—they say he sets all the lawyers and constables at defiance, and laughs in his sleeve at their efforts to catch him—ha—ha. He gets over more ground in a day, than they do in a week—ho—ho."

"That's all over now," said Coates, peevishly. "He has cut his own throat—ridden his famous mare to death."

The countryman almost choked himself, in the attempt to bolt a huge mouthful. "Ay—indeed! How happened that?" asked he, so soon as he recovered speech.

"The fool rode her from London to York, last night," returned Coates; "such a feat was never performed before—what horse could be expected to live through such work as that?"

"Ah, he were a fool to attempt that," observed the countryman, "but you followed, belike?"

"We did."

"And took him arter all?" asked the rustic, squinting more horribly than ever.

"No," returned Coates, "I can't say we did—But we'll have him yet. I'm pretty sure he can't be far off—we may be nearer him than we imagine."

"May be so, Sir," returned the countryman; "but might I be so bold as to ask how many horses you used i' the chase—some half dozen, perhaps?"

"Half dozen!" growled Paterson; "we had twenty at the least."

"And I ONE," mentally ejaculated Turpin, for he was the countryman.

END OF BOOK THE FOURTH.

BOOK V.

The Oath.

It was an ill oath, better broke than kept;
The laws of nature, and of nations, do
Dispense with matters of divinity
In such a case.

TATEHAM.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

CHAPTER I.

Hind. Are all our horses and our arms in safety?
Furbo. They feed like Pluto's palfreys, under ground;
Our pistols, swords, and other furniture,
Are safely locked up at our rendezvous.

PRINCE OF PRIGS' REVELS.

THE hut on Thorne Waste, to which we have before incidentally alluded, and whither we are now about to repair, was a low, lone hovel, situate on the banks of the deep and oozy Don, at the eastern extremity of that extensive Moor. Ostensibly its owner fulfilled the duties of ferryman to that part of the river; but as the road which skirted his tenement was but little frequented, his craft was for the most part allowed to sleep undisturbed in her moorings.

In reality, however, he was the inland agent of a horde of smugglers, who infested the neighbouring coast; his cabin was their rendezvous; and not unfrequently, it was said, the depository of their contraband goods. Conkey Jem (so was he called by his associates, on account of the Slawkenbergian promontory which decorated his countenance) had been an old hand at the same trade; but having returned from a seven years' leave of absence from his own country, procured by his lawless life, now managed matters with more circumspection and prudence, and had never since been detected in his former illicit traffic; nor, though so marvellously gifted in that particular himself, was he ever known to *nose* upon any of his accomplices; or, in other words, to betray them. On the contrary, his hut was a sort of asylum for all fugitives from justice; and, although the sanctity of his walls would, in all probability, have been but little regarded, had any one been detected within them, yet, strange to say, even if a robber had been tracked (as it often chanced) to Jem's imme-

diate neighbourhood, all traces of him were sure to be lost at the ferryman's hut; and further search rendered useless.

Within, the hut presented such an appearance as might be expected, from its owner's pursuits, and its own unpromising exterior. Consisting of little more than a couple of rooms, the rude white-washed mud walls exhibited, in lieu of prints of more pretension, a gallery of choicely-illustrated ballads, celebrating the exploits of various highwaymen, renowned in song; amongst which, our friend Dick Turpin figured conspicuously upon his sable steed, Bess being represented by a huge rampant, black patch, and Dick, with a pistol considerably longer than the arm that sustained it. Next to this curious collection, was a drum net, a fishing rod, a landing net, an eel spear, and other piscatorial apparatus, with a couple of sculls, and a boat hook, indicative of Jem's ferryman's office, suspended by various hooks; the whole blackened and begrimed by peat smoke, there being no legitimate means of *exit* permitted to

the vapour which was generated by the turf-covered hearth-stone. The only window indeed in the hut was to the front; the back apartment, which served Jem for dormitory, had no aperture whatever for the admission of light, except such as was afforded through the door of communication between the rooms. A few broken rush-bottomed chairs, with a couple of dirty tables, formed the sum total of the ferryman's furniture.

Notwithstanding the grotesque effect of his exaggerated nasal organ, Jem's aspect was at once savage and repulsive; his lank black hair hung about his inflamed visage in wild elf locks, the animal predominating throughout; his eyes were small, red, and wolfish, and glared suspiciously from beneath his scarred and tufted eye-brows—while certain of his teeth projected, like the tusks of a boar, from out his coarse-lipped, sensual mouth. Dwarfish in stature, and deformed in person, Jem was built for strength; and what with his width of shoulder, and shortness of neck, his figure looked as square and solid

as a cube. His throat and hirsute chest, constantly exposed to the weather, had acquired a glowing tan, while his arms, uncovered to the shoulders, and clothed with fur like a bear's hide, down, almost, to the tips of his fingers—presented a knot of folded muscles, the concentrated force of which few would have desired to encounter in action.

It was now on the stroke of midnight, and Jem, who had been lying extended upon the floor of his hovel, suddenly aroused by that warning impulse which never fails to awaken one of his calling at the exact moment when they require to be upon the alert, now set about fanning into flame the expiring fuel upon his hearth. Having succeeded in igniting further portions of turf, Jem proceeded to examine the security of his door and window, and satisfied that lock and bolt were shot, and that the shutter was carefully closed—he kindled a light at his fire, and walked towards his bed-room. But it was not to retire for the night, that the ferryman entered his dormitory. Beside his crazy couch stood a litter

of empty bottles, and a beer cask, crowding the chamber. The latter he rolled aside, and pressing his foot upon the plank beneath it, the board gave way, and a trap-door opening, discovered a ladder conducting, apparently, into the bowels of the earth. Jem leaned over the abyss, and called, in hoarse accents, to some one below.

An answer was immediately returned, and a light became soon afterwards visible at the foot of the ladder. Two figures next ascended; the first who set foot within the ferryman's chamber was Alan Rookwood; the other, as the reader may perhaps conjecture, was his grandson.

"Is it the hour?" asked Luke, as he sprang from out the trap-door.

"Ay," replied Jem, with a coarse laugh; "or I had not disturbed myself to call you. But may be," added he, softening his manner a little, "you'll like some refreshment before you start? A stoup of Nantz will put you in cue for the job, ha, ha!"

"Not I," replied Luke, who could ill tolerate his companion's familiarity.

"Give me to drink," said Alan—walking feebly towards the fire, and extending his skinny fingers before it. "I am chilled by the damps of that swampy cave—the natural heat within me is nigh extinguished."

"Here is that shall put fresh marrow into your old bones," returned Jem, handing him a tumbler of brandy—"never stint it. I'll be sworn you'll be the better on't, for you look desperate queer, man, about the mazzard."

Alan was in sooth a ghastly spectacle; since the reader last heard of him, he was fearfully changed. His countenance was almost exanimate; and when, with shaking hand and trembling lips, he had drained the fiery potion to the dregs, a terrible grimace was excited upon his features, such as is produced upon the corpse by the action of the galvanic machine. Even Jem regarded him with a sort of apprehension. After he had taken breath for a moment, Alan broke out into a fit of wild and immoderate laughter.

"Why, ay," said he, "this is indeed to grow young again, and to feel fresh fire within one's

veins. Who would have thought so much of life and energy could reside in this little vessel? I am myself once more, and not the same soulless, pulse-less, lump of clay, I was a moment or two back. The damps of that den had destroyed me—and the solitude—the *waking dreams* I've had—the visions!—horrible!—but I will not think of those—I am better now—ready to execute my plans—*Thy* plans I should say, grandson Luke. Are our horses in readiness? Why do we tarry? The hour is arrived, and I would not that my new-blown courage should evaporate, ere the great work, for which I live, be accomplished. That done, I ask no further stimulant—Let us away."

"We tarry but for Turpin," said Luke; "I am as impatient as yourself. I fear some mischance must have befallen him, or he would have been true to his appointment. Do you not think so?" added he, addressing the ferryman.

"Why," replied Jem, reluctantly, "since you put it home to me, and I can't conceal it no longer,

I'll tell you what I did'nt tell afore, for fear you should be down in the mouth about it; Dick Turpin can do nothing for you—he's grabb'd."

"Turpin apprehended!" ejaculated Luke.

"Ay," returned Jem. "I learnt from a farmer, who crossed the ferry at night-fall, that he were grabb'd this morning at York, after having ridden his famous cherry-coloured prad to death—that's what hurts me more nor all the rest; though I fear Dick will scarce cheat the gallows this go.—His time's up, I reckon."

"Will you supply his place, and accompany us?" asked Luke, of the ferryman.

"No—no—" replied Jem, shaking his head—"there's too much risk, and too little profit, in the business for me—it won't pay."

"And what might tempt you to undertake the enterprise?" asked Alan.

"More than you have to offer, Master Peter," replied Jem, who had not been enlightened upon the subject of Alan's real name or condition.

"How know you that?" demanded Alan, "Name your demand."

"Well then, I'll not say but a hundred pounds, if you had it, might bribe me——."

"To part with your soul to the devil, I doubt not," said Luke, fiercely stamping the ground. "Let us begone—we need not his mercenary aid—we will do without him."

"Stay," said Alan—"you shall have the hundred, provided you will assure us of your services."

"Cut no more blarneyfied whids, Master Sexton," replied Jem, in a gruff tone.—"If I'm to go, I must have the chink down—and that's more nor either of you can do, I'm thinking."

"Give me thy purse," whispered Alan, to his grandson—"Pshaw," continued he, "dost hesitate? This man can do much for us. Think upon Eleanor, and be prudent. Thou canst not accomplish thy task unaided." Taking the amount from the purse, he gave it to the ferryman, adding—"If we succeed, the sum shall be doubled, and now let us set out."

During Alan's speech, Jem's sharp eyes had

been fastened upon the purse, while he mechanically clutched the bank notes which were given to him. He could not remove his gaze, but continued staring at the treasure before him, as if he would willingly, by force, have made it all his own.

Alan saw the error he had committed, in exposing the contents of the purse to the avaricious ferryman, and was about to restore it to Luke, when the bag was suddenly snatched from his grasp, and himself levelled, by a blow, upon the floor. Conkey Jem had found the temptation irresistible. Knowing himself to be a match for both his companions, and imagining himself secure from interruption, he conceived the idea of making away with them, and possessing himself of their wealth. No sooner had he disposed of Alan, than he assaulted Luke, who met his charge half way. With the vigour and alacrity of the latter, the reader is already acquainted, but he was no match for the Herculean strength of the double-jointed ferryman, who, with the ferocity

of the boar he so much resembled, thus furiously attacked him. Nevertheless, as may be imagined, he was not disposed to yield up his life tamely. He saw at once the villain's murderous intentions, and, well aware of his prodigious power, would not have risked a close struggle, could he have avoided it; but it was inevitable. Snatching the eel spear from the wall, he had hurled it at the head of his adversary, but without effect. In the next instant, he was locked in a clasp terrible as that of a polar bear. In spite of all his struggles, Luke was speedily hurled to the ground; and Jem, who had thrown himself upon him, was apparently searching about for some weapon, to put a bloody termination to the conflict, when a horse was heard at the door, three taps repeated slowly, one after the other, and a call from a whistle.

"Damnation!" ejaculated Jem, gruffly; "interrupted!" And he seemed irresolute, slightly altering his position on Luke's body.

The moment was fortunate for Luke, and, in all probability, saved his life. He extricated

himself from the ferryman's grasp—regained his feet; and, what was of more importance, the weapon he had thrown away.

"Villain!" cried he, about to plunge the spear with all his force into his enemy's side. "You shall——"

The whistle was again heard without.

"Don't you mark that?" cried Jem;—"'tis Turpin's call."

"Turpin!" echoed Luke—dropping the point of his weapon. "Unbar the door, thou treacherous rascal, and admit him."

"Well, say no more about it, Sir Luke," said Jem, fawningly; "I knows I owes you my life—and I thank you for it. Take back the *lour**— he should not have shown it me—it was that as did all the mischief."

"Unbar the door, and parley not," said Luke, contemptuously.

Jem complied with pretended alacrity, but with real reluctance, casting suspicious glances

* Money.

at Luke, as he withdrew the bolts. The door, at length, being opened—haggard, exhausted, and covered with dust, Dick Turpin staggered into the hut.

"Well, I am here," said he, with a hollow laugh.—"I've kept my word—ha—ha! I've been damnably put to it—but here I am, ha—ha!" and he sank upon one of the stools.

"We heard you were apprehended," said Luke. "I am glad to find the information was false," added he, glancing angrily at the ferryman.

"False!" echoed Dick.—"Whoever told you that, told you a lie, Sir Luke.—But what are you scowling at, old Charon?—and you, Sir Luke?—Why do you glower at each other?—Make fast the door—bolt it, Cerberus—right. Now give me a glass of brandy—and then I'll talk—a bumper—so—another. What's that I see—a dead man? Old Peter.—Alan, I mean—has any thing happened to him, that he has taken his measure there so quietly?"

"Nothing, I trust," said Luke, stooping to

raise up his grandsire.—"The blow has stunned him."

"The blow?"—repeated Turpin.—"What! there *has* been a quarrel then? I thought as much, from your agreeable looks at each other. Come—come—we must have no differences. Give the old earthworm a taste of this—I'll engage it will bring him too, fast enough.—Ay, rub his temples with it if you'd rather—but it's a better remedy down the gullet—the natural course—and hark ye, Jem, search your crib quickly, and see if you have any *grub* within it, and any more *bub* in the cellar—I'm as hungry as a hunter, and as thirsty as a camel."

While the ferryman went in search of such provisions as his hovel afforded, Turpin lent his assistance towards the revival of Alan Rookwood; and it was not long before his efforts, united with those of Luke, were successful, and Alan restored to consciousness. He was greatly surprised to find the highwayman had joined them, and expressed an earnest desire to quit the hut as speedily as possible.

"That shall be done forthwith, my dear

fellow," said Dick. "But if you had fasted as long as I have done, and gone through a few of my fatigues into the bargain, you would perceive, without difficulty, the propriety of supping before you started. In the mean time here comes Jem, with a flitch of bacon and a loaf. Egad, I can scarce wait for the toasting. In my present mood, I could almost devour a grunter in the sty." Whereupon, he applied himself to the loaf, and to a bottle of stout March ale, which Jem placed upon the table, quaffing copious draughts of the latter, while the ferryman employed himself in toasting certain rashers of the flitch upon the hissing embers.

Luke meanwhile stalked impatiently about the room. He had laid aside his tridental spear, having first, however, placed a pistol within his breast, to be ready for instant service, should occasion demand it, as he could now put little reliance upon the ferryman's fidelity. He glanced with impatience at Turpin, who pursued his meal with a steady voracity, worthy of a half-famished soldier;—but the highwayman returned no answer to his looks, except such as

was conveyed by the incessant clatter of his masticating jaws, during the progress of his, apparently, interminable repast.

"Ready for you in a second, Sir Luke," said Dick; "all right now—capital ale, Charon—strong as Styx—ha, ha!—one other rasher, and I've done—sorry to keep you—can't conceive how clever I put the winkers upon 'em at York, in the dress of a countryman—all owing to old Balty, the Patrico—an old pall—ha, ha! My old palls never *nose* upon me, eh, Jem—always help one out of the water—always staunch—here's health to you, old crony."

Jem returned a sulky response, as he placed the last rasher on the table, which was speedily discussed.

"Poor Bess," muttered Dick, as he quaffed off the final glass of ale. "Poor wench;—we buried her by the road side, beneath the trees—deep—deep. Her remains shall never be disturbed. Alas! Alas! my bonny Black Bess! but no matter—her name is yet alive—her deeds will survive her—the trial is over. And

now," continued he, rising from his seat; "I'm with you. Where are the tits?"

"In the stable, underground," growled Jem.

Alan Rookwood in the meantime had joined his grandson, and they conversed an instant or two apart.

"My strength will not bear me through the night," said he. "That fellow has thoroughly disabled me. You must now go without me to the hall. Here is the key of the secret passage. You know the entrance. I will await you in the tomb."

"The tomb!" echoed Luke.

"Ay, our family vault," returned Alan, with a ghastly grin—"it is the only place of security for me now. But let me see *her* there. Let me know that my vengeance is complete—that I triumph in my death over him, the accursed *brother* — through thee, my grandson. *Thou* hast a rival brother—a successful one—thou knowest now what hatred is."

"I do," returned Luke, fiercely.

"But not such hate as mine—which through a life, a long life, hath endured—intense as when 'twas first engendered in my bosom—which *from one* hath spread o'er all my race—o'er all save *thee*—and which, even now, when death stares me in the face—when the spirit pants to fly from its prison-house, burns fierce as ever. Thou canst not know what hate like that may be. Thou must have wrongs—such wrongs as *mine* first."

"My hate to Ranulph is bitter as thine own to——"

"Name him not," shrieked Alan. "But oh! to think upon the bride he robbed me of—the young—the beautiful—whom I loved to madness—whose memory is a barbed shaft, yet rankling keen as ever at my heart. God of Justice, how is it that I have thus long survived—but some men die by inches. My dying lips shall name him once again, and then 'twill be but to blend his name with curses."

"I speak of him no more," said Luke. "I will meet you in the vault."

"And if thou failest——"

"I return not."

"Remember, to-morrow is her wedding-day with Ranulph."

"Think'st thou I forget it?"

"Bear it constantly in mind. To-morrow's dawn must see her *thine* or *his*. Thou hast her oath. To thee or to death she is affianced. If she should hesitate in her election, do not thou hesitate; woman's will is fickle—her scruples of conscience will be readily overcome—she will not heed her vows——but let her not escape thee. Cast off all thy weakness. Thou art young, and not as I am, age-enfeebled. Be firm, and," added he, with a look of terrible meaning, "if all else should fail—if thou art surrounded—if thou canst not bear her off, use this," and he placed a short dagger in Luke's hands. "It hath avenged me ere now on a perjured wife—it will avenge thee of a forsworn mistress, and remove all obstacle to Rookwood."

Luke took the weapon. "Wouldst thou have me kill her?" demanded he.

"Sooner than she should be his."

"Ay, aught sooner than that; but I would not murder both."

"Both?" echoed Alan. "I understand thee not."

"Sybil and Eleanor," replied Luke; "for as surely as I live, will Sybil's death lie at my door."

"How so?" asked Alan; "the poison was self-ministered."

"True," replied Luke, with terrible emphasis, "but I *spoke daggers*. Hearken to me," said he, hollowly whispering in his grandsire's ear. "Methinks I am not long for this world. I have seen her since her death."

"Tut—tut," replied Alan. "'Tis not for thee to talk thus. A truce to these womanish fancies."

"Womanish or not," returned Luke; "either my fancy has deceived me, or I beheld her, distinctly as I now behold thee, within yon cave, while thou wert sleeping by my side."

"Art sure of that?" said Alan, slightly shivering, and regarding his grandson with a look of inquisitive horror. "Was she alone?"

"No! There was another with her."

"It is disordered fancy," cried Alan Rookwood; "thou shalt live—live to inherit Rookwood—live to see them fall crushed beneath thy feet. For myself, if I but see thee master of Eleanor's hand, or know that she no longer lives to bless thy rival, or to mar thy prospects, I care not how soon I brave my threatened doom."

"Of one or other thou shalt be resolved to-night," said Luke, placing the dagger within his vest.

At this moment a trampling of a horse was heard before the hovel, and in another instant a loud knocking resounded from the door. The ferryman instantly extinguished the light, motioning his companions to remain silent.

"What, ho!" shouted a voice; "ferry wanted."

"Gad zooks!" exclaimed Dick, "as I live, 'tis Major Mowbray."

"Major Mowbray," echoed Alan, in amazement. "What doth he here?"

"He's on his way from York to Rookwood I conclude," said Dick. "If he's here, I'll engage the others are not far off."

Scarcely were the words out of Dick's mouth when further clatter was heard at the door, and the tones of Coates were heard, in *altissimo* key, demanding admittance.

"Let us retire into the next room," whispered Turpin, "and then admit them by all means, Jem; and hark ye, manage to detain 'em a few seconds."

"I'll do it," said Jem. "There's a bit of a hole, you can peep through."

Another loud rat-tat was heard at the door, threatening to burst it off its hinges.

"Well, I be coming," said Jem, seeing the coast was clear, in a drowsy yawning tone, as if just awakened from sleep. "You'll cross the river none the faster for making so much noise." Saying which, he unbarred the door, and Coates and Paterson, who, it appeared, were proceeding to Rookwood with the Major, entered the hovel.

Major Mowbray remained on horseback at the door.

"Can you find us a glass of brandy, to keep out the fog?" said Coates, who knew something of our ferryman's vocations. "I know you are a lad of amazing *spirit*."

"May be I can, Master, if I choose; but won't the other gemman walk in doors, likewise?"

"No, no," said Coates, "Major Mowbray don't choose to dismount."

"Well, as you please," said Jem; "but it will take me a minute or two to get the punt in order for all them prads."

"The brandy in the first place," said Coates. "What's here?" added the loquacious Attorney, noticing the remnants of Turpin's repast. "But that we're hurried I should like a little frizzled bacon, myself."

Jem opened the door of his dormitory with the greatest caution, but apparent indifference, and almost instantly returned with the brandy. Coates filled a glass for Paterson, and then

another for himself. The ferryman left the house apparently to prepare his boat, half closing the door after him.

"By my faith but this is the right thing, Paterson," said the Attorney. "We may be sure that the strength of this was never tested by a gauger's proof; take another thimblefull, we've twelve miles and a heavy pull to go through, ere we reach Rookwood. After all, we made but a poor night's work of it, Paterson—cursed stupid in us, to let him escape. I only wish we had such another chance. Ah, if we had him within reach now—how we would spring upon him—secure him in an instant—I should glory in the encounter. I tell you what, Paterson, if ever he is taken, I shall make a point of attending his execution, and see whether he dies game—ha, ha!—You think he's sure to swing, Paterson, eh?"

"Why yes," replied the chief constable; "I wish I was as certain of my reward, as that Turpin will eventually figure at the scragging post."

"Your reward?" replied Coates. "Make

yourself easy on that score, my boy; you shall have your dues, depend upon it; nay, for the matter of that, I'll give you the money now, if you think proper."

"Nothing like time present," said Paterson; "we'll make all square at once."

"Well then," said Coates, taking out a pocket book, "you shall have the hundred I promised—you won't get Turpin's reward, the three hundred pounds, but that can't be helped—you shall have mine—always a man of my word, Paterson," continued the Attorney, counting out the money.

"So I perceive," said the chief constable—"I shall always be happy to serve you."

"And then there's that other affair, said the Attorney, mysteriously, still occupied in doling out his bank notes—that Luke Bradley's case—the fellow, I mean, who calls himself Sir Luke Rookwood—ha, ha! A rank imposter!—Two fives, that makes fifty—you want another fifty, Paterson—but as I was saying, we may make a good job of that—we must ferret him

out—I know who will come down properly for that, Paterson; and if we could only tuck him up with his brother blade, why it would be worth double—he's all along been a thorn in my Lady Rookwood's side—he's an artful scoundrel."

"Leave him to me," said Paterson; "I'll have him in less than a week. But what's your charge against him?"

"Felony, burglary, murder, every description of crime under the heavens," said Coates. "He's a very devil incarnate. Dick Turpin is as mild as milk compared with him. By the bye, now I think of it, this Jem, Conkey Jem, as folks call him, may know something about Bradley—he's a keen file—I'll *sound* him. Thirty, forty, fifty—there's the exact amount. So much for Dick Turpin."

"Dick Turpin thanks you for it in person," said Dick, suddenly snatching the whole sum from Paterson's hands, and felling the chief constable with a blow of one of his pistols. "I wish I was as sure of escaping the gallows

as I am certain that Paterson has got his reward. You stare, Sir—you are once more in the hands of the Philistines. See who is at your elbow."

Coates, who was terrified almost out of his senses at the sight of Turpin, scarcely ventured to turn his head; but when he did so he was perfectly horror stricken at the threatening aspect of Luke, who held a cutlass in his hand, which he had picked up in the ferryman's bedroom.

"So you would condemn me for crimes which I have never committed," said Luke. "I am tempted, I own, to add the destruction of your worthless existence to their number."

"Mercy, for God's sake mercy!" cried Coates, throwing himself at Luke's feet; "I meant not what I said."

"Hence, reptile," said Luke, pushing him aside. "I leave thee to be dealt upon by others."

At this juncture the door of the hut was flung open, and in rushed Major Mowbray, sword in hand, followed by Conkey Jem.

"There he stands, Sir," cried the latter; "upon him."

"What! Conkey Jem turned *snitch* upon his palls?" cried Dick; "I scarce believe my own ears."

"Make yourself scarce, Dick," scowled Jem; "the jigger's* open, and the boat loose—leave Luke to his fate—he's sold."

"Never, vile traitor," shouted Dick; "'tis thou art *sold*, not he;" and almost ere the words were spoken a ball was lodged in the brain of the treacherous ferryman.

Major Mowbray, meanwhile, had rushed furiously upon Luke, who met his assault with determined calmness. The strife was sharp, and threatened a speedy and fatal issue; on the Major's side it was a desperate attack of cut and thrust, which Luke had some difficulty in parrying; but as yet no wounds were inflicted. Soldier as was the Major, Luke was not a whit

* Door.

inferior to him in his knowledge of the science of defence, and in the exercise of the broad sword he was perhaps the more skilful of the two: upon the present occasion his coolness stood him in admirable stead. Seeing him hard pressed, Turpin would have come to his assistance, but Luke shouted to him to stand aside, and all that Dick could do, amid the terrific clash of steel, was to kick the tables out of the way of the combatants. Luke's arm was now slightly grazed by a pass made by the Major, which he had parried. The smart of the wound roused his ire. He attacked the Major in his turn, with so much vigour and good will, that, driven backwards by the irresistible assault, Major Mowbray stumbled over the ferryman's body, which happened to lie in his way, and, his sword being struck out of his grasp, his life became at once at his adversary's disposal.

Luke sheathed his sword. "Major Mowbray," said he, sternly, "your life is in my

power—I spare it for the blood that is between us—for your sister's sake—I would not raise my hand against her brother."

"I disclaim your kindred with me, villain!" wrathfully exclaimed the Major. "I hold you no otherwise than as a wretched imposter, who has set up claims you cannot justify; and as to my sister, if you but dare to couple her name," and the Major made an ineffectual attempt to raise himself, and to regain his sword, which Turpin, however, removed.

"Dare!" echoed Luke, scornfully; "hereafter you may learn to fear my threats, and acknowledge the extent of my daring; and in that confidence I give you life. Listen to me, Sir. I am now bound for Rookwood—I have private access to the house—to your sister's chamber—*her chamber*—marked you that? I shall go armed—attended. This night she shall be mine. From you—from Ranulph—from Lady Rookwood, from all will I bear her off. She shall be mine, and you before the dawn my brother, or——" and Luke paused.

"What further villainy remains untold?" inquired the Major, fiercely.

"You shall bewail her memory," replied Luke, gloomily.

"I embrace the latter alternative with rapture," replied the Major—"God grant her firmness to resist thee—but I tremble for her;" and the stern soldier groaned aloud in his agony.

"Here is a cord to bind him," said Turpin; "he must remain a prisoner here."

"Right," said Alan Rookwood—"unless—but enough blood has been shed already."

"Ay, marry has it," said Dick—"and I had rather not have given Conkey Jem a taste of blue plumb, had there been any other mode of silencing the snitching scoundrel, which there was not; but as to the Major, he's a gallant enemy, and shall have fair play as long as Dick Turpin stands by.—"Come, Sir," added he to the Major, as he bound him hand and foot with the rope. "I'll do it as gently as I can—but you

had better submit with a good grace—there's no help for it. And now for my friend Paterson, who was so anxious to furnish me with a hempen cravat, before my neck was in order—he shall have an extra twist of the rope himself, to teach him the inconvenience of a tight neckcloth, when he recovers." Saying which, he bound Paterson in such manner, that any attempt at liberation on the chief constable's part, would infallibly strangle him. "As to you, Mr. Coates," said he, addressing the trembling man of law, "you shall to Rookwood with us.—You may yet be useful, and I'll accommodate you with a seat behind my own saddle—a distinction I never yet conferred upon any of your tribe. Recollect the countryman at the bowling-green at York—ha, ha! Come along, Sir." And having kicked out the turf fire, Dick prepared to depart.

It would be vain to describe the feelings of rage and despair which agitated the Major's bosom, as he saw the party quit the hovel, accompanied by Coates. Aware as he was of their destination, after one or two desperate

but ineffectual attempts to liberate himself, by which he only increased the painful constriction of his bond, without in the slightest degree ameliorating his condition, he resigned himself, with bitterest forebodings, to his fate. There was no one even to sympathize with his sufferings; beside him lay the gory corpse of the ferryman, and at a little distance, the scarcely more animate frame of the chief constable. And here we must leave him, to follow, for a short space, the course of Luke and his companions.

Concerning themselves little about their own steeds, the party took those which first offered, and embarking man and horse in the boat, soon pushed across the waters of the lutulent Don. Arrived at the opposite banks of the river, they mounted, and, guided by Luke, after half an hour's sharp riding arrived at the skirts of Rookwood Park. Entering this beautiful sylvan domain, they rode for some time silently among the trees, till they arrived at the knoll, whence Luke had beheld the hall, on the eventful night of his dis-

covery of his mother's wedding ring.—A few days only had passed over his head; but during that brief space what storms had swept over his bosom—what ravages had they not made! He was then all ardour—all impetuosity—all independence. The future presented a bright unclouded prospect. Wealth, honours, and happiness, apparently awaited him. It was still the same exquisite scene, hushed, holy, tranquil—even solemn, as upon that glorious night. The moon was out, silvering wood and water, and shining on the white walls of the tranquil mansion. Nature was calm, serene, peaceful as ever. Beneath the trees, he saw the bounding deer—upon the water, the misty wreaths of vapour—all, all was dreamy, delightful, soothing, all save his heart—*there* was the conflict—*there* the change. Was it a troubled dream, with whose dark oppression he was struggling, or was it stern, waking, actual life? That moment's review of his wild career was terrible. He saw to what extremes his

ungovernable passions had hurried him—he saw their inevitable consequences—he saw also his own fate—but he rushed madly on.

He swept round the park, keeping under the covert of the wood, till he arrived at the avenue leading to the mansion. The stems of the aged limes gleamed silvery white in the moonshine. Luke drew in his rein beneath one of the largest of the trees.

"A branch has fallen," said he, as his grandsire joined him.

"Ha!" exclaimed Alan, "a branch from that tree?"

"It bodes ill to Ranulph," whispered Luke, "doth it not?"

"Perchance," muttered Alan. "'Tis a vast bough."

"We meet within an hour," said Luke, abruptly.

"At the tomb," replied Alan; "I will await thee there."

CHAPTER II.

You have heard it rumoured for these many years
None of our family dies, but there is seen
The shape of an old woman, which is given
By tradition to us to have been murthered
By her nephews for her riches. Such a figure
One night—as the prince sat up late at's book—
Appeared to him; when crying out for help
The gentlemen of his chamber found his Grace
All in a cold sweat, altered much in face
And language; since which apparition
He hath grown worse and worse, and much I fear
He cannot live.

DUCHESS OF MALFY.

WE shall now revisit Rookwood Place, from which we have so long, of necessity, absented ourselves.

In one of those large antique rooms, which, the reader may perchance remember, belonged to the suite of apartments constituting the eastern wing of the mansion—upon the same night as that in which the events just detailed took place, and it might be about the same time, sat

Eleanor, and her now attendant, the gipsy Handassah. The eyes of the former were fixed, with a mixture of tenderness and pity, upon the lineaments of another lovely female countenance, bearing a striking resemblance to her own, though evidently, from its attire, and bygone costume, not intended for her, depicted upon a tablet, placed upon a raised frame before her. It was nigh the witching hour of night. The room was sombre and dusky, partially dismantled of its once flowing arras, and the lights, which were set upon the table, but feebly illumined its dreary extent. Tradition marked it out as the chamber in which many of the hapless dames of Rookwood had expired—and hence had Superstition claimed it as her peculiar domain. The room was reputed to be haunted, and had for a long space shared the fate of haunted rooms—complete desertion. It was now tenanted by one too young, too pure, to fear aught unearthly. Eleanor seemed, nevertheless, affected by the profound melancholy of the picture upon which she gazed. At length

Handassah observed her start, and avert her eyes shudderingly from the picture.

"Take it hence," exclaimed Eleanor; "I have looked at that image of my ancestress, till it has seemed endowed with life—till its eyes have appeared to return my gaze, and weep. Remove it, Handassah."

Handassah silently withdrew the tablet, placing it against the wall of the chamber.

"Not there—not there," cried Eleanor; "turn it with its face to the wall—I cannot bear those eyes; and now come hither, girl—approach me nearer—for I know not what of sudden dread has crossed me—this was *her* room, Handassah—the chamber of my ancestress—of all the Ladies Rookwood—where they say—ha!—Didst thou not hear a noise?—a rustle in the tapestry—a footstep near the wall?—why, thou look'st frightened as I look, wench—Stay by me—I will not have thee stir from my side—'twas mere fancy."

"No doubt, Lady," said Handassah, with her eyes fixed upon the arras.

"Hist!" exclaimed Eleanor. "there 'tis again."

"'Tis nothing," replied Handassah; but her looks belied her words.

"Well, I will command myself," said Eleanor, endeavouring to regain her calmness; "but the thoughts of the Lady Eleanor—for she was an Eleanor like to me, Handassah—and ah! even more ill-fated and unhappy—have brought a whole train of melancholy fancies into my mind—I cannot banish them: nay, though painful to me, I recur to these images of dread with a species of fascination, as if in their fate I contemplated mine own. Not one who hath wedded a Rookwood, but hath rued it."

"Yet you will wed one," said Handassah.

"He is not like the rest," said Eleanor.

"How know you that, Lady?" asked Handassah. "His time may not yet be come. See what to-morrow will bring forth."

"Thou art averse to my marriage with Ranulph, Handassah."

"I was Sybil's handmaid, ere I was your's,

Lady. I bear in memory a solemn compact with the dead, which this marriage will violate. You are plighted by oath to another, if he demand your hand."

"But he has not demanded it."

"Would you accept him were he to do so?" asked Handassah, suddenly.

"I meant not that," replied Eleanor. "My oath is annulled——"

"Say not so, Lady," cried Handassah, "'twas not for this that Sybil spared your life. I love you, but I loved Sybil, and I would see her dying behests complied with."

"It may not be, Handassah," replied Eleanor. "Why, from a phantom sense of honour, am I to sacrifice my whole existence to one who neither can love me, nor whom I myself could love? Am I to wed this man because, in her blind idolatry of him, she enforced an oath upon me which I had no power to resist, but which was mentally cancelled while taken? Recal not the horrors of that dreadful cell—urge not the subject more. 'Tis in the hope that I may be freed for ever

from this persecution, that I have consented thus early to wed with Ranulph. This will set Luke's fancied claims at rest for ever."

Handassah answered not, but bent her head, as if in acquiescence.

Steps were now heard near the door, and a servant ushered in our old acquaintance, Doctor Small and Mrs. Mowbray.

"I came to take my leave of you for the night, my dear young lady," said the Doctor; "but before I start for the Vicarage, I have just a word or two more to say, in addition to the advice which you were so good as to receive from me this morning. Suppose you allow your attendant to retire for a few minutes. What I have got to say concerns yourself solely. Your mother will bear us company. There," continued the Doctor, as Handassah was dismissed—"I am glad that dark-faced gipsy has taken her departure. I can't say that I like her sharp suspicious manner; and the first exercise I should make of my powers, were I to be your husband, should be to discharge the

soubrette. But to the point of my visit. We are alone, I think. But this is a queer house, Miss Mowbray; and this is the queerest part of it. Walls have ears, they say; and there are so many holes and corners in this mansion, that one ought never to talk secrets above one's breath."

"But I am yet to learn, Sir," said Eleanor, "that there is any secret to be told."

"Why, not much I own," replied the Doctor; "at least what has occurred is not a secret in the house by this time. What do you think *has* happened?"

"It is impossible for me to conjecture. Nothing to Ranulph I hope."

"Nothing of consequence, I trust—though he is in part concerned with it."

"What is it?" asked Eleanor.

"Pray satisfy her curiosity, Doctor?" interposed Mrs. Mowbray.

"Well then," said Small, rather more gravely, "the fact of the matter stands thus:—Lady Rookwood, who, as you know was not the

meekest wife in the world, now turns out by no means the gentlest mother, and has, within this hour, found out that she has some objection to your union with her son."

"You alarm me, Doctor."

"Don't alarm yourself at all. It will be all got over without difficulty, and only requires a little management. Ranulph is with her now, and I doubt not will arrange all to her satisfaction."

"But what was her objection?" asked Eleanor; "was it any one founded upon my obligation to Luke—my oath?"

"Tut—tut!—dismiss that subject from your mind entirely," said the Doctor. "That oath is no more binding on your conscience than would have been the ties of marriage had you been wedded by yon recusant Romish Priest, Father Checkley, upon whom however the Lord be merciful. Bestow not a thought upon that. My anxiety, together with that of your mother, is to see you now, as speedily as may be, wedded to Ranulph, and then that idle question is set at rest

for ever; and therefore, even if such a thing were to occur, as that Lady Rookwood should not yield her consent to your marriage, why, as that consent is totally unnecessary, we must go through the ceremonial without it."

"The grounds of Lady Rookwood's objections," said Mrs. Mowbray———

"Ay, the grounds of her Ladyship's objections," interposed Small, who liked nobody to talk but himself, "are simply these, and exactly the sort of objections one would expect her to raise. She cannot bear the idea of abandoning the control of the house and estates to other hands. She cannot and will not relinquish her station as head of the establishment, which Ranulph has insisted upon as your right. I thought, when I conversed with her on this subject, that she was changed, but

Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret.

I beg your pardon. She is, and always will be, the same."

"But why did not Ranulph concede the point

to her? I wish not to dwell here. I care not for these domains—for this mansion. They have no charms for me. I could he happy with Ranulph any where, but happier any where than here."

The kind-hearted Doctor squeezed her hand in reply, brushing a tear from his eyes.

"Why did he not concede it!" said Mrs. Mowbray, proudly. "Because the choice remained not with him. It was not his to concede. This house—these lands—all—all are thine—and it were meet requital indeed, that, after they have so long been wrongfully withheld from thee, thou shouldst be a dependant of Lady Rookwood."

"Without going quite so far as that, Madam," said the Doctor, "it is but justice to your daughter that she should be put in full possession of her rights; nor should I for one instant advise, or even consent, to her inhabiting the same house with Lady Rookwood. Her Ladyship's peculiarities of temper are such as to preclude all possibility of happiness; but

at the same time I trust that by management—always by management, Madam—her Ladyship's quick departure may be ensured. I understand that all such legal arrangements in the way of settlements as could be entered into, between your daughter and her future husband, are completed. I have only to regret the absence of my friend, Mr. Coates, in this momentous occurrence. It will be a loss to him. But hark! I hear Ranulph's step in the gallery. He will tell us the result of his final interview. I came to give you advice, my dear," added the Doctor in a low tone to Eleanor; "but I find you heed it not. 'Whoso humbleth himself, shall be exalted.' I am glad you do not split upon that rock which has broken the shins of half your generation."

At this moment, Ranulph Rookwood entered the room. His cheeks were flushed, and his manner agitated.

The whole party were startled by his looks.

"What has happened?" asked Doctor Small and Mrs. Mowbray, in the same breath.

Ranulph hesitated for a moment in his

answer, during which space he regarded Eleanor with the deepest anxiety, and seemed revolving within himself, how he could frame his reply, in such way as should be least painful to her feelings; while, with instinctive apprehension of coming misfortune, Miss Mowbray eagerly seconded the inquiries of her friends.

"It is with great pain," said he, at length, in a tone of despondency, not unmingled with displeasure, "that I am obliged to descant upon the infirmities of a parent, and to censure her conduct as severely as I may do now. I feel the impropriety of such a step, and I would willingly avoid it, could I do so in justice to my own feelings—and especially at a moment like the present—when every hope of my life is fixed upon uniting you, dear Eleanor, by ties almost as near as my own to that parent. But the interview which I have just had with Lady Rookwood—the bitter, heart-breaking interview, compels me to reprobate her conduct in the strongest terms, as harsh, unjust, and dishonourable; and if I could wholly throw off the son,

as she avows she has thrown off the mother, I should unhesitatingly pronounce it as little short of ——"

"Dear Ranulph," said Eleanor, palpitating with apprehension, "I never saw you so much moved."

"Nor with so much reason," rejoined Ranulph. "For myself, I could endure anything—but for *you*——"

"And does your dispute relate to *me?*" asked Eleanor. "And is it for *my* sake that you have braved your mother's displeasure? Is it because Lady Rookwood is unwilling to resign the control of this house, and those lands to *me*, that you have parted in anger with your mother? Was this the cause of your quarrel?"

"It was the origin of it," replied Ranulph.

"Mother," said Eleanor, firmly, to Mrs. Mowbray, "go with me to Lady Rookwood's chamber."

"Wherefore?" demanded Mrs. Mowbray.

"Question me not, dear mother—or let me go alone."

"Daughter, I guess your meaning," said Mrs. Mowbray, sternly—"You would relinquish your claims in favour of Lady Rookwood—Is it not so?"

"Since you oblige me to answer you, mother," said Eleanor, blushing, "I must admit that you have guessed my meaning. To Lady Rookwood, as to yourself, I would be a daughter as far as is consistent with my duty," added she, blushing still more deeply, "but my first consideration shall be my husband; and if Lady Rookwood can be content—but pray question me not further—accompany me to her chamber."

"Eleanor," interposed Ranulph—"dearest Eleanor—the sacrifice you would make is unecessary—uncalled for. You do not know my mother—she would not, I grieve to say it, appreciate the generosity of your motives—she would not give you credit for your feelings—she would only resent your visit as an intrusion."

"My daughter comprehends you, Sir," said Mrs. Mowbray, haughtily. "I will take care

that in her own house, my daughter shall remain free from insult."

"Mother, dear mother," said Eleanor, "do not wilfully misunderstand him."

"You can be little aware, Madam," said Ranulph calmly, but sadly, "how much I have recently endured—how much of parental anger—how much of parental malediction I have incurred, to save you and your daughter from the indignity you apprehend. As I before said, you do not know my mother; nor could it enter into any well-regulated imagination to conceive the extremities to which the violence of her passion will, when her schemes are thwarted, hurry her. The terms upon which you met together, will not escape your recollection—nor shall I need to call to your mind, her haughtiness, her coldness.—That coldness has since ripened into distrust—and the match which she was at first all anxiety to promote, she would now utterly set aside, were it in her power to do so. Whence this alteration in her views has arisen, I have no means of

ascertaining; it is not my mother's custom to give a reason for her actions, or her wishes: it is all sufficient to express them; but I have perceived that as the time has drawn nigh for the fulfilment of my dearest hopes, her unwillingness has increased; until to-day what had hitherto been confined to hints, has been openly expressed, and absolute objections raised. Such, however, is the peculiarity of her temper, that I trusted, even at the eleventh hour, I should be able to work a change—but no!—our last meeting was decisive. She commanded me to break off the match. At once, and peremptorily, I refused. Pardon me, madam—pardon me, dearest Eleanor, if I thus enter into particulars—but it is absolutely necessary now that I should be explicit. Enraged at my opposition to her wishes, her fury became ungovernable. With appalling imprecations upon the memory of my poor father, and upon *your* father madam, whose chief offence in her eyes was, it seems, the disposition of his property to Eleanor, she bade me begone, and take her curses as my wed-

ding portion. Beneath this roof—beneath *her* roof, she added, no marriage of mine should e'er take place. I might go hence, or might stay, as I thought fitting; but you and your daughter, whom she characterized as intruders, should not remain another hour within her house. To this wild raving, I answered, with as much composure as I could command, that she entirely mistook her own position, and that, so far from the odium of intrusion resting with you, if applicable to any one, the term must necessarily affix itself on those who, through ignorance, had for years unjustly deprived the rightful owners of this place of their inheritance. Upon this, her wrath was boundless. She disowned me as her son—disclaimed all maternal regard, and heaped upon my head a frightful malediction, at the recollection of which I still tremble. But I will spare you further details of this dreadful scene. To me it is most distressing; for however firmly resolved I may be to pursue a line of conduct, which every sound principle within me dictates

as the correct one, yet I cannot be insensible to the awful responsibility which I shall incur in bringing down a mother's curse upon my head, nor to the jeopardy in which her own excessive violence may place her."

Mrs. Mowbray listened to Ranulph's explanation in haughty displeasure; Eleanor with throbbing, tearful interest; Doctor Small, with mixed feelings of anger and astonishment.

"Lady Rookwood's conduct," said the Doctor, "is, you must forgive me, my dear Ranulph, for using strong expressions, outrageous beyond all precedent, and only excusable on the ground of insanity, to which I wish it were possible we could attribute it. There is, however, too much method in her madness to allow us to indulge any such notion: she is shrewd, dangerous, and designing; and since she has resolved to oppose this match, she will leave no means untried to do so. I scarcely know how to advise you under the circumstances—that is, if my advice were asked."

"Which I scarcely think it is likely to be, Sir,"

said Mrs. Mowbray, coldly. "After what has occurred, *I* shall think it my duty to break off this alliance, which I have never considered to be so desirable that its rupture will occasion me an instant's uneasiness."

"A plague on all these Rookwoods!" muttered Small. "One would think all the pride of Lucifer were centered in their bosoms. But, Madam," continued the benevolent Doctor, "have you no consideration for the feelings of your daughter, or for those of one who is no distant relation to you—your nephew? Your son, Major Mowbray, is, if I mistake not, most eager for this union to take place between his sister and his friend."

"My children have been accustomed to yield implicit obedience to my wishes," said Mrs. Mowbray; "and Major Mowbray, I am sure, will see the propriety of the step I am about to take. I am content, at least, to abide by *his* opinion."

"Snub'd again!" mentally ejaculated the Doctor, with a shrug of despair. "It is useless attempting to work upon such impracticable material."

Ranulph remained mute, in an attitude of profound melancholy. An eloquent interchange of glances had passed between him and Eleanor, communicating to each the anxious state of the other's feelings.

It was at this crisis that the door was suddenly opened, and old Agnes, Lady Rookwood's aged attendant, rushed into the room, and sank upon her knees on the floor, her limbs shaking, her teeth chattering, and every feature expressive of intense terror. Ranulph went instantly towards her, to demand the cause of her alarm.

"No, let me pray," cried Agnes, as he took her hand in the attempt to raise her—"let me pray, while there is yet time—let the worthy Doctor pray beside me. Pray for an overladen soul, Sir—pray heartily, as you would hope for mercy yourself; ah! little know the righteous of the terrors of those that are beyond the pale of mercy. The Lord pardon me my iniquities, and absolve *her*."

"Her! whom do you mean?" asked Ranulph in agitation. "You do not allude to my mother?"

"You have no longer a mother, young man," said Agnes, solemnly.

"What!" exclaimed Ranulph, terror stricken, "is she dead?"

"She is gone."

"Gone! How?" exclaimed all, their amazement increasing each instant, at the terror of the old woman, and the apparently terrible occasion of it.

"Speak!" exclaimed Ranulph; "but why do I loiter? my mother, perchance, is dying—let me go." But the old woman maintained her clutching grasp, which was strong and convulsive, as that of one struggling betwixt life and death. "It's no use, I tell you; it's all over," said she—"the dead are come—the dead are come, and she is gone——"

"Gone!—Whither?"

"To the grave—to the tomb," said Agnes, in a deep and hollow tone, and with a look that froze Ranulph's soul. "Listen to me, Ranulph, my child, my nurseling—listen while I can speak. We were alone, your mother and I, after that scene

between you—after the dark denunciations she had heaped upon the dead, when I heard a low and gasping kind of sob, and there I saw your mother, staring wildly upon the vacancy—as if she saw that which I dare not think of."

"What think you she beheld?" asked Ranulph, quaking with apprehension.

"*That which had been your father*," returned Agnes, in a hollow tone. "Don't doubt me, Sir—you'll find the truth of what I say, anon—I am sure he was there. There was a thrilling speechless horror in the very sight of her countenance that froze my old blood to ice—to the ice in which 'tis now—ough—ough. Well, at length she rose, with her eyes still fixed, and passed through the panelled door, without a word. She is gone!"

"What madness is this!" cried Ranulph. "Let me go, woman."

"Go then," cried Agnes. "If you will not believe my words, search for her, and satisfy yourself. She is gone, I tell you—the room

was empty, all the rooms were empty—the passage void—through the door she went—silently, silently—slow. But come, let us search for her throughout the house—come, come—"

And she rushed out of the chamber, followed by Ranulph, Mrs. Mowbray, and Doctor Small, who were all eager to have some explanation of the distracted story of Agnes.

Handassah followed Ranulph to the door, closed it after him, and then locked it within side. This done, she walked back hastily towards Eleanor, exclaiming, in a tone of exultation, "You have parted with him for ever."

CHAPTER III.

Card.—Now art thou come? Thou look'st ghastly;
There sits in thy face some great determination,
Mixed with some fear,
Bos.—Thus it lightens into action:
I am come to kill thee.

DUCHESS OF MALFY.

"WHAT mean you, girl?" cried Eleanor, alarmed at her manner. "Why have you fastened the door? Open it, I command you!"

"Command *me*!" laughed Handassah, scornfully. "What if I refuse your mandate? what if, in my turn, I bid *you* to obey me? I never owned but one mistress. If I have bowed my neck to you for a time, 'twas to fulfil her dying wishes. If I have submitted to your control, it was to accomplish what I have now accomplished. Your oath—remember your oath; the hour is come for its fulfilment."

Saying which, Handassah clapped her hands. A panel in the wall opened, and Luke stood suddenly before them. Silently, and with stern deliberation, he strode towards Eleanor, and seizing one of her hands, drew her forcibly towards him. Eleanor resisted not; she had not the power; neither did she scream, for so extreme was her terror, that for the moment it took away all power of utterance. Luke neither stirred nor spoke, but, still maintaining his hold, gazed searchingly upon her features, while Eleanor, as if spell-bound, could not withdraw her eyes from his. Nothing more terribly impressive could be conceived than Luke's whole appearance. Harassed and exhausted by the life he had recently led—deprived almost of natural rest—goaded by remorse, his frame was almost worn to the bone, while his countenance, once dark and swarthy, was now blanched and colourless as whitest marble. This pallid and death-like hue was, in all probability, owing to the loss of blood which he had sustained from the wound inflicted by the

Major, with the stains of which his apparel was dyed; for though staunched, the effusion had been sufficient to cause great faintness. His dark eyes blazed with their wonted fire—nay they looked darker and larger from his exceeding paleness, and so much of intense mental and bodily suffering was imprinted upon his whole countenance, that, despite its fierceness and desperation, few could have regarded him without sympathy. Real desperation has so much of agony in its character, that few can witness it unmoved. His garb was not that in which the reader first beheld him, but a dark simple suit, corresponding more with his real rank in life, than his former peasant's attire; but it was disordered by his recent conflict, and stained with bloody testimonials of the recent fray; while his long sable curls, once his pride and ornament, now hung in intertangled elf locks, like a coil of wreathed water-snakes. Even in her terror, as she dwelt upon his noble features, Eleanor could not help admitting that she beheld the undoubted descendant, and

the living likeness of the handsomest and most distinguished of her house—the profligate and criminal Sir Reginald. As her eye, mechanically following this train of thought, wandered for an instant to the haughty portraiture of Sir Reginald, which formed part of the family pictures, and thence to those of his unfortunate Lady, she was struck with the fancy that, by some terrible fatality, the tragic horrors of bye-gone days were to be again enacted in their persons, and that they were in some way strangely identified with their unfortunate progenitors. So forcibly was this idea impressed upon her countenance, that Luke, who had followed the direction of her glances, became instantly aware of it. Drawing her nearer to the portrait of the Lady Eleanor, he traced the resemblance in mute wonder; thence, turning towards that of Sir Reginald, he proudly exclaimed:—"You doubted once my lineage, maiden—can you gaze on those features, which would almost seem to be a reflexion of mine own, and longer hesitate whose descendant I am? I glory in my like-

ness—there is a wild delight in setting human emotions at nought, which he was said to feel—which I feel now. Within these halls I seem to breathe an atmosphere congenial to me. I visit what I oft have visited in my dreams; or as in a state of pre-existence. Methinks, as I gaze on thee, I could almost deem myself Sir Reginald, and thou his bride, the Lady Eleanor. Our fates were parallel—*she* was united to her Lord by ties of hatred—by an OATH—a *bridal oath!*—so art thou to me. And she could ne'er escape him—could ne'er throw off her bondage—nor shalt thou. I claim the fulfilment of *thy* oath—thou art *mine.*"

"Never—never!" shrieked Eleanor, struggling to disengage herself. But Luke laughed at her feeble efforts. Handassah stood by, a passive spectatress of the scene, with her arms folded upon her bosom.

"You refuse compliance!" said Luke, scornfully. "Have you no hopes of heaven, no fears of perdition, that you dare to violate your vow? Bethink you of the awful nature of that obligation—of the life which was laid down to

purchase it—of the blood which will cry out for vengeance 'gainst the *murderess*, should you hesitate. By that blood-cemented sacrament—I claim you as my own. You are mine." And he dragged her towards the opening. Eleanor uttered a prolonged and terrific scream.

" Be silent, on your life—" added he, searching for the dagger given to him by Alan Rookwood —when, as his hand sought the weapon, Eleanor escaped from his grasp, and fled towards the door; but Handassah had anticipated her intention. The key was withdrawn from the lock, and the wretched maiden vainly tried to open it.

At this instant Turpin appeared at the sliding panel.

" Quick — quick," cried he, impatiently — " dispatch, in the devil's name—the house is alarmed—I hear young Ranulph's voice in the gallery."

" Ranulph !" shrieked Eleanor—" Then I am saved." And she redoubled her outcries for assistance.

Luke again seized his victim. —Her hands

clutched so convulsively fast in her despairing energy against the handle of the door, that he could not tear her thence. By this time Ranulph Rookwood, who had caught her reiterated screams for help, was at the entrance. He heard her struggles—he heard Luke's threats—his mockery —his derisive laughter; — but vainly, vainly did he attempt to force it open. It was of the strongest oak, and the bolts resisted all his efforts. A board alone divided him from his mistress. He could hear her sobs and gasps— he saw, from the action of the handle, with what tenacity she clung to it; and, stung to frenzy by the sight, he hurled himself against the sturdy plank—but all in vain. At length the handle was still—there was a heavy fall upon the floor—a stifled scream—and a sound as of a body being dragged along. The thought was madness.

" To the panel—to the panel," cried a voice (it was that of Turpin) from within.

" The panel! ha!" echoed Ranulph, with a sudden gleam of hope. " I may yet save her."

And he darted along the corridor with the swiftness of thought.

Luke meanwhile had for some minutes fruitlessly exhausted all his force to drag Eleanor from the door. Despair gave her strength—she clutched at the door—but she felt her strength failing her—her grasp was relaxing. And then the maddening thought, that she would be shortly his—that he would slay her—while the idea that Ranulph was so near, and yet unable to protect her, added gall even to her bitterness. With savage delight Luke exulted in the lovers' tortures. He heard Ranulph's ineffectual attempts—he heard his groans—he heard their mutual cries. Inflamed by jealousy, he triumphed in his power of vengeance, and even prolonged the torture which accident had given him the means of inflicting. He stood like the inquisitor, who marks his victim's anguish on the rack, and calculates his powers of further endurance. But he could no longer dally, even with this horrible gratification. His companion grew impatient. Eleanor's fair long

tresses had escaped from their confinement in the struggle, and fell down her neck in disorder. Twining his fingers amidst its folds, Luke dragged her from her hold backwards;—and, incapable of further resistance, her strength completely exhausted, the wretched girl fell to the ground.

Luke now raised her almost inanimate form in his arms, and had nigh reached the aperture, when a crash was heard in the panel opposite to that by which he was about to escape, and communicating with a further apartment. It was thrown open, and Ranulph Rookwood presented himself at the narrow partition. An exclamation of joy, that he was yet in time, escaped his lips; and he was about to clear the partition at a bound, and to precipitate himself upon Luke, when, as suddenly as his own action, was the person of the unfortunate Mr. Coates wedged into the aperture.

"Traitor," cried Ranulph, regarding Coates with concentrated fury, "dare you to oppose me—hence, or by heaven I will cut you down."

"'Tis impossible," ejaculated the Attorney. "For your own sake, Sir Ranulph—for my sake—I beg—I implore of you—not to attempt to pass this way—Try the other door."

Ranulph said no more. He passed his sword through the body of the miserable Attorney, who, with a deep groan, fell. The only obstacle to his passage being thus removed, he at once leaped into the room.

The brothers were now confronted together, but little of brotherly love mingled with the glances which they threw upon each other. Ranulph's gentle, but withal enthusiastic temperament, had kindled, under his present excitement, like flax at the sudden approach of flame. He was wild with frenzy. Luke was calmer, but his fury was deadly and inextinguishable. The meeting was terrible on both sides.

With one arm Luke enfolded Eleanor, with the other he uplifted the dagger. Its point was towards her bosom. Scowling grim defiance at Ranulph—he exclaimed, in a determined

tone—"Advance a footstep, and my dagger descends into her heart."

Ranulph hesitated, uncertain how to act; foaming with rage, and yet trembling with apprehension.

"Ranulph," gasped Eleanor. "Life without thee were valueless—advance—avenge me."

But Ranulph still hesitated. He could not, by any act of his own, compromise Eleanor's safety.

Luke saw his advantage, and was not slow to profit by it. "You seal her destruction if you stir," said he.

"Villain," returned Ranulph, between his ground teeth, and with difficulty commanding sufficient coolness to speak with deliberation, "you perceive your power; but injure her, and nothing earthly shall protect you. Free her, and take your life and liberty; nay, reward if you will—you cannot otherwise escape me."

"Escape you!" laughed Luke, disdainfully. "Stand aside, and let me pass. Beware," added

he, sternly, "how you oppose me—I would not have a brother's blood upon my soul."

"Nor I," cried Ranulph; "but you pass not;" and he placed himself full in Luke's path.

Luke, however, steadily moved forward, holding Eleanor between himself and Ranulph, so as to shield his own person; but fancying he saw an opportunity of dealing a blow without injury to his mistress, the latter was about to hazard the thrust, when his arms were seized behind, and he was rendered powerless.

"Lost, lost," groaned he; "she is lost to me for ever!"

"I fear that's but too true," replied Turpin, for it was the Highwayman whose grasp confined Ranulph.

"Must I see her borne away before my eyes?" cried Ranulph. "Release me—set me free."

"Quite impossible at present," returned Dick. "Mount and away, Sir Luke," continued he —"never mind me—leave me to shift for myself."

" Eleanor," cried Ranulph, as she passed close by his side.

" Ranulph," shrieked Eleanor with a loud scream, recalled to consciousness by his voice, " farewell for ever."

" Ay, for ever," responded Luke, triumphantly —" you meet no more on earth."

He was about to pass through the panel, when Eleanor exerted all her remaining strength in a last futile attempt at liberation. In the struggle a packet fell from his bosom.

Handassah stooped to pick it up.

" From Sybil?" exclaimed she, glancing at the superscription.

" Remember my promise to old Barbara," roared Dick, who had some curiosity, as the reader knows, to learn what the package contained. " The time is arrived—Eleanor is in your power—in your presence."

" Give me the packet," said Luke; and, added he, resigning Eleanor for the instant to Handassah's custody, " take the steel, and grasp her firmly."

Handassah, who, though slight of figure, was of singular personal strength, twined her arms about Miss Mowbray in such manner as to preclude all possibility of motion.

Luke tore open the package. It was a box, carefully enclosed in several folds of linen, and lastly within a sheet of paper, on which was inscribed these words:

THE DOWER OF SYBIL.

Hastily, and with much curiosity, Luke raised the lid of the box. It contained one long silken tress of blackest hair, curiously braided. It was Sybil's. His first impulse was to cast it from him; his next, reproachfully to raise it to his lips. He started as if a snake had stung him.

At this moment, a loud clamour was heard in the gallery. In the next, the door was assailed by violent strokes, evidently proceeding from some weighty instrument, impelled by the united strength of several assailants.

The voice of Turpin rose above the deafening din. "A bullet for the first who enters,"

shouted he—"Quick Sir Luke, and the prize is safe—away, and—"

But as he seconded his exhortation with a glance at Luke, he broke off the half-uttered sentence, and started with horror and amazement. Ere the cause could be expressed, the door was burst open, and a crowd of domestics, headed by Major Mowbray and Titus Tyrconnel, rushed into the room.

"Nay, then the game's up," exclaimed Dick, "I have done with Rookwood," and springing through the panel, he was seen no more.

When the new comers first looked round, they could perceive only two figures besides themselves, those of the two lovers. Eleanor having sunk pale, exhausted, and almost senseless, into the arms of Ranulph. Presently, however, a ghastly object attracted their attention. All rushed towards it—all recoiled, as soon as they discovered that it was the lifeless body of Luke Rookwood. His limbs were stiff, like those of a corpse which has for hours been such—his eyes protruded from their sockets—

his face was livid and blotched. All bespoke, with terrible certainty, the efficacy of the poison, and the full accomplishment of Barbara's revenge.

Handassah was gone. Probably she had escaped ere Turpin fled. At all events, she was heard of no more at Rookwood.

It required but little to recall the senses of Eleanor. Shortly she revived, and as she gazed around, and became conscious of her escape, she uttered exclamations of thanksgiving, and sank into the embraces of her brother.

Meanwhile Mrs. Mowbray and Doctor Small had joined the assemblage.

The worthy Doctor had been full of alarm, but his meditated condolences were now changed to congratulations, as he heard the particulars of the terrible scene that had occurred, and of Eleanor's singular and almost providential deliverance.

"After what has befallen, Madam," said the Doctor to Mrs. Mowbray, slightly coughing,

" you can no longer raise any objections to a certain union, eh?"

" I will answer for my mother in that particular," said Major Mowbray, stepping forward.

" She will answer for herself, my son," said Mrs. Mowbray. " The match has her full and entire consent; but to what am I to attribute the unexpected happiness of your return?"

" To a chain of singular circumstances," replied the Major, " which I will hereafter detail to you. Suffice it to say, that but for this gentleman's fortunate arrival, I might have been detained a prisoner, without *parole*, in a lone hut perhaps for days; and to add to my distress, fully acquainted with the meditated abduction of my sister. It was excessively lucky for me, Mr. Tyrconnel, that you happened to pass that way, and for poor Paterson likewise."

" Arrah, by my *sowl*, Major, and you may

say that with safety, and it was particularly fortunate that we stumbled upon the tits in the cellar, or we'd never have been here just in the nick of it. I begin to think we've lost all chance of taking Dick Turpin this time. He's got clane away."

"I am not sorry for his escape," said the Major. "He's a brave fellow; and I respect courage wherever I find it, even, Sir, in a highwayman."

We shall not pause to describe the affectionate meeting which now ensued between the brother and sister—the congratulations upon Eleanor's escape from peril, intermingled with the tenderest embraces, and the warmest thanks offered to Ranulph for his gallant service. "She is your's, my dear boy," said the Major; "and though you are a Rookwood, and she bears the ill-fated name of Eleanor, I predict that, contrary to the usual custom of our families in such cases, all your misfortunes have occurred *before* marriage."

"There is only one thing," said Small,

with a very peculiar expression, which might almost be construed into serio-comic could we suspect the benevolent Doctor of any such waggery, " which can possibly throw a shade over our present felicity. Lady Rookwood is not to be heard of."

" My poor mother," said Ranulph, starting.

" Make yourself easy," said the Doctor; " I doubt not we shall *hear* of her to-morrow. My only fear," added he, half aside, " is that she may return *before*."

" One other circumstance afflicts me," said Ranulph. " Poor Mr. Coates."

" What's that you say of Mr. Coates? Sir Ranulph," exclaimed Titus.

" I fear he is killed," said Ranulph. " Let some one search for the body."

" Kilt!" echoed Titus. " Is it kilt he is? Ah! *ullagone*, and is it over with him entirely? Bring me to his remains."

" He will bring them to you himself," said the Attorney, stepping forward. " Luckily, Sir Ranulph," said the incurable punster, " it was

merely the *outer coats* that your sword passed through; the *inner* remains uninjured, so that you did not act as my *conveyancer* to eternity—I've as many lives as a cat—ha, ha!"

Ranulph welcomed the facetious man of law with no little satisfaction.

We think it unnecessary to enter into much further detail. Another chamber was prepared for Eleanor's reception, to which she was almost immediately transported. The remains of the once fierce and haughty Luke, now stiff and stark, but still wearing, even in death, their proud character, were placed upon the self-same bier, and covered with the self-same pall which, but a week ago, had furnished forth his father's funeral. And as the domestics crowded round the corpse, there was not one of them but commented upon his startling resemblance to his grandsire, Sir Reginald; nor, amongst the superstitious, was the falling of the fatal bough forgotten.

Tranquillity was at length restored at the Hall. Throughout the night, and during the

next day, Ranulph made every search for his mother, but no tidings could be learned of her. Seriously alarmed, he then caused more strict and general inquiry to be instituted, but with like unsuccessful effect. It was not, indeed, till some years afterwards that her fate was ascertained.

Her old handmaiden, Agnes, died raving, in the course of the following day, declaring, upon her death-bed, that she was certain "Sir Piers had fetched away her mistress;" a notion which prevailed pretty generally amongst the credulous, of whom there were not few to be met with at the Hall.

CHAPTER IV.

So now 'tis ended, like an old wife's story.

WEBSTER.

NOTWITHSTANDING the obscurity which hung over the fate of Lady Rookwood, the celebration of the nuptials of Sir Ranulph and Eleanor was not long delayed; the ceremony took place at the parish church, and the worthy Vicar officiated upon the occasion. It was a joyous sight to all who witnessed it, and not few were they who did so, for the whole neighbourhood was bidden to the festival. The old avenue was thronged with bright and beaming faces, rustic maidens deck'd out in ribbons of many-coloured splendour, and stout youths in their best holiday trim; nor was the lusty yeoman

and his buxom spouse—nor yet the patriarch of the village, nor prattling child, wanting. Even the ancestral rooks seemed to participate in the universal merriment, and returned, from their eyries, a hoarse greeting, like a lusty chorus of laughter to the frolic train. The church-yard path was strewn with flowers — the church itself a complete garland. Never was there seen a blither wedding—the sun smiled upon the bride, accounted a fortunate omen, as dark lowering skies and stormy weather had, within the memory of the oldest of the tenantry, inauspiciously ushered in all former espousals. The bride had recovered her bloom and beauty, while the melancholy which had seeemingly settled for ever upon the open brow of the bridegroom, had now given place to a pensive shade, which only added interest to his expressive features; and, as in simple state, after the completion of the sacred rites, the youthful pair walked arm in arm amongst their thronging and admiring tenants towards the hall, many a fervent prayer was breathed that

the curse of the House of Rookwood might be averted from their heads; and, not to leave the reader in doubt upon the subject, we can add that these aspirations were not in vain, but that the day which dawned so brightly, was one of serene and unclouded beauty to its close.

After the ceremonial, the day was devoted to festivity. Crowded with company, from its ample hall to its kitchen ingle, the old mansion could scarce contain its numerous guests, while its walls resounded with hearty peals of laughter, to which they had been long unaccustomed. The tables groaned beneath the lordly baron of beef—the weighty chine—the castled pasty flanked on the one hand with neats' tongue, and on the other defended by a mountainous ham, an excellent *pièce de résistance*—and every other substantial appliance of ancient hospitality. Barrels of mighty ale were broached, and their nut-brown contents widely distributed, and the health of the bride and bridegroom was enthusiastically drunk in the brimming wassail cup of spicy wine with

floating toast. Titus Tyrconnel acted as master of the ceremonies, and was, Mr. Coates said, "*quite in his element.*" So much was he elated, that he ventured to cut some of his old jokes upon the Vicar, and, strange to say, without incurring the resentment of Small.

To retrace the darker course of our narrative, we must state that some weeks before this happy event, had the remains of the unfortunate Sir Luke Rookwood been gathered to those of his fathers. The document which attested his birth being found upon his person, the claims which were denied to him in life, were conceded in death; and he was interred, with all the pomp and peculiar solemnity proper to one of the house, within the tomb of his ancestry.

It was then that a discovery was made respecting Alan Rookwood, in order to explain which we must again revert to the night of the meditated *enlèvement* of Eleanor.

After quitting his grandson in the avenue, Alan shaped his course among the fields in the

direction to the church. He sought his own humble, but now deserted dwelling. The door had been forced—some of its meagre furniture was removed; and the dog, his sole companion, had fled. "Poor Mole!" said he; "thou hast found, I trust, a better master." And having possessed himself of what he came in search, namely, a bunch of keys and his lantern, deposited in an out-of-the-way cupboard, which had escaped notice, he quickly departed.

He was once more within the church-yard—once more upon that awful stage whereon he had chosen to enact for a long season his late fantastical character; and he gazed upon the church tower, glistening in the moonshine—the green and undulating hillocks—the "chequered cross-sticks," the clustered head-stones—and the black and portentous yew trees, as upon "old familiar faces." He mused for a few moments upon the scene, apparently with deep interest. He then walked beneath the shadow of one of the yews, chaunting an odd stanza or so of one of his wild melodies, wrapped the while, it

would seem, in affectionate contemplation of the subject matter of his song:

THE YEW.

A noxious tree is the church-yard yew,
As if from the dead its sap it drew *;
Dark are its branches, and dismal to see,
Like plumes at Death's latest solemnity.
Spectral and jagged, and black as the wings
Which some spirit of ill o'er a sepulchre flings:
Oh! a terrible tree is the church-yard yew;—
Like it is nothing so ghastly to view.

Yet this baleful tree hath a core so sound,
Can nought so tough in the grove be found;
From it were fashioned brave English bows,
The boast of our isle, and the dread of its foes.
For our sturdy sires cut their stoutest staves
From the branch that hung o'er their fathers' graves;
And though it be dreary and dismal to view,
Staunch at the heart is the church-yard yew.

His ditty concluded, Alan entered the church-yard, taking care to leave the door slightly ajar, in order to facilitate his grandson's entrance. For an instant, he lingered in the

* ——— Metuenda que succo
Taxus.
STATIUS.

chancel. The full moonlight fell upon the monuments of his race; and, directed by the fell instinct of hate, Alan's eye rested upon the gilded entablature of his perfidious brother, Reginald, and muttering curses, "not loud, but deep," he passed on. Having lighted his lantern, in no tranquil mood, he descended into the vault, observing a similar caution with respect to the portal of the cemetery, which he left partially unclosed, with the key in the lock. Here he resolved to abide Luke's coming. The reader knows what probability there was of his expectations being realized.

For awhile he paced the tomb, wrapped in gloomy meditation, and pondering, it might be, upon the result of Luke's expedition, and the fulfilment of his own dark schemes, scowling from time to time, beneath his bent eyebrows, counting the grim array of coffins, and noticing, with something like satisfaction, that the shell which contained the remains of his daughter, had been restored to its former position. He then bethought him of Father Checkley's mid-

night intrusion upon his conference with Luke, and their apprehension of a supernatural visitation, and his curiosity was stimulated to ascertain by what means the priest had gained admission to the spot unperceived, and unheard. He resolved to sound the floor, and see whether any secret entrance existed; and hollowly and dully did the hard flagging return the stroke of his heel, as he pursued his scrutiny. At length the metallic ringing of an iron plate, immediately behind the marble effigy of Sir Ranulph, resolved the point. There it was that the priest had found access to the vault; but Alan's disappointment was excessive, when he discovered that this plate was fastened on the underside, and all communication thence with the church-yard, or to wherever else it might conduct him, cut off; but the present was not the season for further investigation, and tolerably pleased with the discovery he had already made, he returned to his silent march around the sepulchre.

At length a sound, like the sudden shutting

of the church door, broke upon the profound stillness of the holy edifice. In the hush that succeeded, a footstep was distinctly heard threading the aisle.

"He comes—he comes!" exclaimed Alan, joyfully—adding, an instant after, in an altered voice—"but he comes alone."

The footstep drew near to the mouth of the vault—it was upon the stairs—Alan stepped forward to greet, as he supposed, his grandson, but started back in astonishment and dismay, as he encountered, in his stead, Lady Rookwood. Alan retreated, while the Lady advanced, swinging the iron door after her, which closed with a tremendous clang. Approaching the statue of the first Sir Ranulph, she paused, and Alan then remarked the singular and terrible expression of her eyes, which appeared to be fixed upon the statue, or upon some invisible object near it. There was something in her whole attitude and manner, calculated to impress the deepest terror on the beholder. And Alan gazed upon her with

an awe which momently increased. Lady Rookwood's bearing was as proud and erect as we have formerly described it to have been—her brow was as haughtily bent—her chiselled lip as disdainfully curled, but the staring, changeless eye, and the deep-heaved sob, which occasionally escaped her, betrayed how much she was under the influence of mortal terror. Alan watched her in amazement. He knew not how the scene was likely to terminate, nor what could have induced her to visit this ghostly spot, at such an hour, and alone; but he resolved to abide the issue in silence—profound as her own. After a time, however, his impatience got the better of his fears and scruples, and he spoke.

"What doth Lady Rookwood in the abode of the dead?" asked he, at length.

She started at the sound of his voice, but still kept her eye fixed upon the vacancy.

"Hast thou not beckoned me hither, and am I not come?" returned she, in a hollow tone. "And now thou askest wherefore I am here. I am here, because, as in thy life I feared

thee not, neither in death do I fear thee—I am here because——"

"What seest thou?" interrupted Peter, with ill-suppressed terrror.

"What see I—ha—ha—" shouted Lady Rookwood, amidst discordant laughter—"that which might appal a heart less stout than mine—a figure anguish writhen, with veins that glow as with a subtle and consuming flame. A substance yet a shadow, in thy living likeness—ha—frown if thou wilt, I can return thy glances—"

"Where dost thou see this vision?" demanded Alan.

"Where!" echoed Lady Rookwood, becoming for the first time, sensible of the presence of a stranger. "Ha—who art thou that questionest me?—what art thou?—speak!"

"No matter who or what I am," returned Alan.—"I ask thee what thou dost behold."

"Canst thou see nothing?"

"Nothing," replied Alan.

"Thou didst know Sir Piers Rookwood?"

"Is it he?" asked Alan, drawing near her.

"It is he," replied Lady Rookwood; "I have followed him hither, and I will follow him whithersoever he leads me, were it to——"

"What doth he now?" asked Alan, "see'st thou him still?"

"The figure points to that sarcophagus." returned Lady Rookwood. "Canst raise up the lid."

"No," replied Alan, "my strength will not avail to lift it."

"Yet let the trial be made," said Lady Rookwood; "the figure points there still—my own arm shall aid thee."

Alan watched her in dumb wonder. She advanced towards the marble monument, and beckoned him to follow. Reluctantly did he comply. Without any expectation of being able to move the ponderous lid of the sarcophagus, at Lady Rookwood's renewed request, he applied himself to raise it. What was his

surprise, when, beneath their united efforts, he found the ponderous slab slowly revolve upon its vast hinges, and with little further difficulty, it was completely elevated; though it still required the exertion of all Alan's strength to prop it open, and prevent its falling back.

"What doth it contain?" asked Lady Rookwood.

"A warrior's ashes," returned Alan.

"There is a rusty dagger upon a fold of faded linen," cried Lady Rookwood, holding down the light.

"It is the weapon with which the first dame of the house of Rookwood was stabbed," said Alan, with a grim smile.

> "Which whoso graspeth in the tomb,
> Shall clutch until the hour of doom."

So saith the rhyme.—Have you seen enough?"

"No," said Lady Rookwood, precipitating herself into the marble coffin. "That weapon shall be mine."

"Come forth — come forth," cried Alan. "My arm trembles—I cannot support the lid."

"I will have it, though I grasp it to eternity," shrieked Lady Rookwood, vainly endeavouring to wrest away the dagger, which was fastened, together with the linen upon which it lay, by some adhesive substance to the bottom of the shell.

At this moment, Alan Rookwood happened to cast his eye upward, and he then beheld what filled him with new terror. The axe of the sable statue was poised above its head, as in the act to strike him. Some secret machinery, it was evident, existed between the sarcophagus lid and this mysterious image—but in the first impulse of his alarm, Alan abandoned his hold of the slab, and it sunk slowly downwards. He uttered a loud cry as it moved. Lady Rookwood heard this cry—she raised herself at the same moment—the dagger was in her hand—she pressed against the lid, but its downward force was too great to be withstood—

the light was within the sarcophagus, and Alan could discern her features—the expression was terrible—she uttered one shriek—and the lid closed for ever!

Alan was in total darkness. The light had been enclosed with Lady Rookwood. There was something so horrible in her probable fate, that even *he* shuddered as he thought upon it. Exerting all his remaining strength, he essayed to raise the lid, but now it was more firmly closed than ever. It defied all his power. Once, for an instant, he fancied that it yielded to his straining sinews, but it was only his hand that slided upon the surface of the marble. It was fixed—immovable. The sides and lid rang with the strokes which the unfortunate Lady bestowed upon them with the dagger's point, but these were not long heard. Presently, all was still, the marble ceased to vibrate with her blows. Alan struck the lid with his knuckles, but no response was returned. All was silent.

He now turned his attention to his own

situation, which had become sufficiently alarming. An hour must have elapsed, yet Luke had not arrived. The door of the vault was closed—the key was in the lock, and on the outside. He was himself a prisoner within the tomb. What if Luke should *not* return? What if he were slain, as it might chance, in the enterprise? That thought flashed across his brain, like an electric shock. None knew of his retreat but his grandson. He might perish of famine, within this desolate vault.

But he checked this notion as soon as it was formed;—it was too dreadful to be indulged in. A thousand circumstances might conspire to detain Luke. He was sure to come. Yet the solitude—the darkness was awful, almost intolerable;—the dying and the dead around him. He dared not stir.

Another hour—an age it seemed to him—had passed—still Luke came not. Horrible forebodings crossed him—but he would not surrender himself to them. He rose, and crawled in the direction, as he supposed, of the door—fearful

even of the stealthy sound of his own footsteps. He reached it, and his heart once more throbbed with hope—he bent his ear to the key—he drew in his breath—he listened for any sound—but nothing was to be heard. A groan had been almost music in his ears.

Another hour was gone!—He was now a prey to the most frightful apprehensions, agitated in turns by the wildest emotions of rage and terror. He at one moment imagined that Luke had abandoned him, and heaped curses upon his head—at the next, convinced that he had fallen, he bewailed with equal bitterness his grandson's fate and his own. He paced the tomb like one distracted. He stamped upon the iron plate—he smote with his hands upon the door—he shouted, and the vault hollowly echoed his lamentations. But Time's sand ran on, and Luke had not arrived.

Alan now abandoned himself wholly to despair. No longer could he anticipate his grandson's coming—no longer hope for deliverance. His

fate was sealed.—Death awaited.—He must anticipate his slow but inevitable stroke—enduring all the grinding horrors of starvation. The contemplation of such an end was madness, but he was forced to contemplate it now; and so appalling did it appear to his imagination, that he half resolved to dash out his brains against the walls of the sepulchre, and put an end at once to his tortures. And nothing, but a doubt whether he might not, by imperfectly accomplishing his purpose, increase his own suffering, prevented him from putting this dreadful idea into execution. His dagger was gone; and he had no other weapon. Terrors of a new kind now assailed him. The dead he fancied were bursting from their coffins, and he peopled the darkness with grisly phantoms. They were around about him on each side—whirling and rustling—gibbering, groaning—shrieking—laughing—and lamenting! He was stunned—stifled—the air seemed to grow suffocating—pestilential—the wild laughter was redoubled—the horrible troop assailed him—they dragged

him along the tomb—and amid their howls he fell, and became insensible.

When he returned to himself, it was some time before he could collect his scattered faculties; and when the agonizing consciousness of his terrible situation forced itself upon his mind, he had nigh relapsed into oblivion. He arose—he rushed towards the door—he knocked against it with his knuckles till the blood streamed from them—he scratched against it with his nails till they were torn off by the roots—with immense fury he hurled himself against the iron frame—it was in vain. Again he had recourse to the trap door. He searched for it—he found it. He laid himself upon the ground—there was no interval of space in which he could even introduce a finger's point — he beat it with his clenched hand—he tore it with his teeth— he jumped upon it—he smote it with his heel — the iron returned a sullen sound.

He again essayed the lid of the sarcophagus. Despair nerved his strength. He raised the slab a few inches—he shouted—screamed— but no answer was returned—and again the lid fell.

"She is dead!" cried Alan. "Why have not shared her fate? But mine is to come—and such a death!—ah, ah!" and, frenzied at the thought, he again hurried to the door, and renewed his fruitless attempts to escape, till nature gave way, and he sank upon the floor, groaning and exhausted.

Physical suffering now began to take the place of his mental tortures. Parched and consumed as by a fierce internal fever, he was tormented by unappeasable thirst, of all human ills the most unendurable. His tongue was dry and dusty—his throat inflamed—his lips had lost all moisture. He licked the humid floor—he sought to imbibe the nitrous drops from the walls; but instead of allaying his thirst, they increased it. He would have given the world, had he possessed it, for a draught of cold spring water. Oh, to have died with his lips upon some bubbling fountain's marge—but to perish thus——!

Nor were the pangs of hunger wanting. He had to endure all the horrors of famine, as well as the agonies of quenchless thirst.

In this dreadful state did three days and nights pass over Alan's fated head. Nor night nor day had he. Time, with him, was only measured by its duration, and that seemed interminable. Each hour added only to his suffering, and brought with it no relief. During this period of prolonged misery, reason often tottered on her throne. Sometimes he was under the influence of the wildest passions. He dragged coffins from their recesses—hurled them upon the ground, striving to break them open, and drag forth their loathsome contents. Upon other occasions, he would weep bitterly and wildly; and once—once only, did he attempt to pray, but he started from his knees with an echo of infernal laughter, as he deemed, ringing in his ears. Then, again, would he call down imprecations upon himself and his whole line—trampling upon the pile of coffins he had reared—and, lastly, more subdued, would he creep to the boards that contained the body of his child, kissing them with a frantic outbreak of affection.

At length he became sensible of his approaching dissolution. To him the thought of death might well be terrible, but he quailed not before it, or rather seemed, in his latest moments, to resume all his wonted firmness of character. Gathering together his remaining strength, he dragged himself towards the niche wherein his brother was deposited, and placing his hand upon the coffin, solemnly exclaimed—"My curse—my dying curse—be upon thee evermore!"

Falling with his face upon the coffin, Alan instantly expired. In this attitude were his remains discovered.

Our tale is told. Yet, perhaps, we may be allowed to add a few words respecting two of the subordinate characters of our drama (melodrama we ought to say), namely, Jerry Juniper and the Knight of Malta. What became of the Caper Merchant's son after his flight from Kilburn Wells we have never been able distinctly to ascertain. Juniper, however, would seem to be a sort of wandering Jew, for certain it is, that *somebody very like him* is extant still,

and to be met with at Jerry's old haunts; indeed, we have no doubt of encountering him at the ensuing meetings of Ascot and Hampton.

As regards the Knight of Malta—(Knight of *Roads* 'Rhodes' he should have been)—we are sorry to state, that the career of the Ruffler was terminated in a madhouse, and thus the poor Knight became, in reality, a *Hospitaller!* According to the custom observed in those establishments, the Knight was deprived of his luxuriant locks, and the loss of his beard rendered his case incurable; but in the meantime the barber of the place made his fortune by retailing the material of all the black wigs he could collect to the impostor's dupes.

Such was the latest piece of intelligence that has reached us, of the *Arch-hoaxer* of Canterbury!

Turpin (why disguise it?) was hanged at York, in 1739. His firmness deserted him not at the last. When he mounted the ladder, his left leg trembled; he stamped it impatiently

down, and after a brief chat with the hangman, threw himself suddenly and resolutely from the steps. His sufferings would appear to have been slight. The remains of the vagrant highwayman found a final resting place in the desecrated church-yard of St. George, without the Fishergate postern, a green and grassy cemetery, but withal a melancholy one. A few recent tombs mark out the spots where some of the victims of the late pestilence have been interred; but we have made vain search for Turpin's grave.

The gyves by which he was fettered are still shown at York Castle, and are of prodigious weight and strength; and though the Herculean robber is said to have moved in them with ease, the present turnkey was scarce able to lift the ponderous irons. An old woman of the same city has a lock of hair, said to have been Turpin's, which she avouches her grandfather cut off from the body after the execution, and which the believers look upon with great reverence. O rare Dick Turpin!

L'Envoy.

We shall perhaps be accused of dilating too much upon the character of the Highwayman, and we plead guilty to the charge; but we found it impossible to avoid running a little into extremes. The subject, as Leigh Hunt would say, "has run away with us." Our earliest associations are connected with sunny scenes in Cheshire, said to have been haunted by Turpin; and with one very dear to us (from whose lips, now alas silent, we have listened to many stories of his exploits);—he was a sort of hero. We have had a singular delight in recounting his feats, and hair-breadth escapes; and if the reader derives only half so much pleasure from the perusal of his adventures as we have had in narrating them, our satisfaction will be complete. Perhaps we may have placed him in too favourable a point of view—and yet we know not. As upon those of more important

personages, many doubts rest upon his history. Such as we conceive him to have been, have we drawn him—hoping that the benevolent reader, upon finishing our work, will arrive at the same conclusion; and in the words of the quaint old Prologue to the Prince of Prigs' Revels,

> ———Thank that man,
> Can make each thief a complete Roscian.

THE END.

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